TRIBUTES AND TRANSLATIONS OF TIRUKKURAL



Tributes and Translations of Tirukkural

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PREFACE

We have great pleasure in bringing out this volume on this auspicious day. There is *nothing new or original in this book* except the evaluation. But, it is a long-felt need of the lovers, scholars and devotees of **Tiruvalluvar**. *We hope that this publication will full fill the expectations of our brethren.*

By sheer want of time and space, we could not include the valuable observations of other scholars and greatmen. In this handy volume, there are more than two-hundred entries which *will bring* a new awareness to the remarkable studies made in **Tirukkural**.

In the 'Introduction' the impact of **Valluvar** on the people of Tamilnadu, has been vividly portrayed. The first part of this work contains three major divisions.

One is about **Tiruvalluvar**, the other is about his masterpiece, **Tirukkural** and the third is on comparative study.

The second part is a classified list of various translations in the languages of the world. As far as possible, we have spared no pains to find out the recent translations of **Tirukkural**.

In the third part, an intensive study of evaluation has been undertaken to highlight the views of foreigners and also the editor has attempted to clear the mistaken notions of some of the missionaries.

Misplaced sheets have been discovered at the last moment. They are included under the title "Additions...".

For the convenience of the readers, an 'Author Index' is appended to this work.



We request the readers suggestions and corrections, with due regards, they may be considered them to make the book more perfect in its subsequent prints.

We express our thanks to the publishers of various works who have permitted us to quote from their publications. The senior editor's thanks are due to his young and ethusiestic co-editor for his help and cooperation to bring out this book in a short period.

We record our gratitude to the authorities of the Novel Art Printers for their kind cooperation in the publication of this book with a neat execution.

Tiruvalluvar Editors
Era, 2017,
Margali, 16.
(31-12-86)

DEDICATED

To Rev. Dr. G. U. POPE

With Great Reverence

To Commemorate The Centenary

of his

Translation of the

'SACRED TIRUKKURRAL'

(First September, 1886)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Tiruvalluvar, the great sage and seer, the poet and philosopher of Tamilnadu, is the Everest of Tamil wisdom. He has been acclaimed as one of the eminent poet-philosophers of the world.

KURAL AND ITS PARTS

Tirukkural, is the masterpiece of **Valluvar**, which is a mini-work in size, contains 133 chapters on different aspects of life, and each chapter consists of ten couplets. Each couplet is called **Kural Venba**, which is one of the basic metres of Tamil prosody. This form of verse is popularly known in English as couplets.

This work has been broadly divided into three parts, of which the first deals with **Aram**, the moral values of life, the second discusses the **Porul**, socio-economic values of life, and the third one

Kamattuppal, depicts the psychological values of life. This third part of **Tirukkural** appears entirely different in its form, spirit and presentation from the first two parts of this classic. There are twenty-five chapters, each in turn contains ten Dramatic monologues.

VALLUVAR'S ROLE IN KAMATTUPPAL

In this part, **Tiruvalluvar** plays the role of a creative artist. But in the other two parts, we find **Valluvar** as moral philosopher and a political scientist. Only in the third part, **Valluvar** portrays the fascinating aspects of lovers, the **Akam** tradition which he has inherited from his ancestors.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF TIRUKKURAL

No significant tribute is needed for the supremacy of its subject-matter, than the

fact that it has been translated into a number of languages of the world. Perhaps, it can be claimed that there is no other work of non-religious nature, which stand in comparison with **Tirukkural.**

In the range of subject-matter and the brevity of the couplets, **Kural** excels the other didactic literature of the world.

There are a number of significant aspects of **Tirukkural** which have been pointed by the scholars of the globe. Of which, the captivating feature which arrested the attention of the devotees of different religious creeds, adore **Valluvar,** as one of their own sages.

Saivites of South India, about seven centuries ago, included **Valluvar** in the traditional list of sixty-three **Nayanmars** or the saints of the South Indian Saivism.

They have placed the idols of **Tiruvalluvar** in the Siva temples along with other saints of Saivism. There is a temple, significantly devoted to **Tiruvalluvar** in Mylapore, in the heart of the city of Madras.

We can cite a number of references for the claim of **Valluvar** by different religious devotees.

The Rationalists of Tamilnadu, identify **Tiruvalluvar**, as their own master of ancient times. He has been placed on a high pedestal by them as the earliest free-thinker of Tamilnadu.

MAGNIFICENT MONUMENT

About ten years ago, a magnificent artistic monument has been raised by **Kalaignar Dr. M. Karunanidhi**, who was the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, during that period, in the city of Madras. One can

find the amazing chariot with the icon of **Valluvar** and also many panels of sculptures illustrating the themes of the couplets of ***Tirukkural*** in that splendid monument. This is known as **Valluvar Kottam**, the shrine of **Tiruvalluvar**.

UNIQUE GREATNESS

In no other country, one can find a temple with grandeur and a wonderful monument built to perpetuate the memory of a great poet, like this glorious monument.

The Renaissance Movement, otherwise known as the Dravidian Movement envisaged to establish a new social order on the basis of the philosophy of life enunciated in **Tirukkural**. The righteous way of life, expounded and enunciated by **Tiruvalluvar** is adored as **Valluvam (Valluvar-**

ism), and it has been acclaimed as a modern religious creed.

In the course of this social and cultural revivalism in the Tamil country, **Valluvar** has been deified as a great **Guru** or the preceptor of the Tamils. Hence, there will be no surprise when one finds a statue or sculptured portraiture of **Tiruvalluvar** in the nooks and corners of Tamilnadu. This religious fervour has been imbued by the Democratic Socialists and Marxists of this land, have made successful attempts to trace their ideology in the sacred **Kural.**

In short, in the last quarter of this century, **Valluvar** has been adored as the symbol of Tamil nationalism.

THE PLACE OF TIRUVALLUVAR

As a great thinker, of **Tiruvalluvar,** actually transgresses the frontiers of langu-

age and creed. His scripture of Universalism has induced to recognize him as one of the great philosophers, to be placed in the midst of Socrates, Kant and confucius, the illustrious moral philosophers of the mankind.

In the sphere of political science and public administration, **Valluvar** seems supreme in his treatment and humanistic approach than Aristotle, **Kautilya, Kamantaka, Sukkra,** Machiavelli and Harold Laski.

When we take into consideration, the third part of **Tirukkural**, no other poet can be placed by the side of **Valluvar**, except the mysterious Roman poet, Ovid 43 B.C. 18 A.D., who immortalised the agony and anguish and the ecstacy and exhilaration of the loving-hearts in his famous **Ars Amorous.**

TIRUVALLUVAR ERA

We have no authentic sources to know the life of this sage. **Maraimalai Adigal**, a multi-dimensional personality of this century, with great care and consideration, placed **Tiruvalluvar**, in the pre-Christian Era, on the basis of some internal evidences of **Kural**. He has fixed 31 B.C. as the probable year of **Valluvar's** attainment of salvation. On the basis of this sheet anchor in the history of the Tamils, **Maraimalai Adigal** established **Tiruvalluvar Era**, beginning from that year.

Ten years ago, the Government of Tamilnadu proclaimed that the **Tiruvalluvar** Era should be adopted as the official era of the state government. From that time onwards, this era has been mentioned in all its transactions.

TIRUVALLUVAR DAY

The beginning of the year for the **Tiruvalluvar** Era has been fixed by the government. The second day in the month of **Thai** (which may be reckoned with the 14th or the 15th of January), of the Christian Era.

The first day of **Thai**, is celebrated as Pongal festival by the Tamils for more than ten centuries. The Pongal has been celebrated with pomp and splendour as an harvest festival through the ages. From the forties of this century, this day has become the National Day of the Tamils. The Renaissance Movement of Tamilnadu has given a new orientation to this harvest festival and transformed it as a festival of all the Tamil people without giving importance to it as a festival for the followers of a particular religion.

The second day of **Thai**, i.e. the **next** day of **Pongal**, which was celebrated till recently, as **Mattuppongal**, the thanks giving day to the cattles by the agriculturists of Tamilnadu, was changed and sanctified as **Tiruvalluvar Day**, to perpetuate the memory of **Tiruvalluvar**. This day has become a National Day which is celebrated with great reverence and regard to **Valluvar** and also a day of mirth and joy, a festival of adoring artistic talents and the wisdom of our ancestors. It has become one of the auspicious day, for inauguration of any cultural activity and encouraging the various traditional arts of Tamilnadu. In the future, this day will gain its importance and celebrated with great pomp and splendour. Thus, the **Tiruvalluvar** Day will definitely find a place in the official calender of the Republic of India as the sacred and national day of the Tamils.

THE IMPACT OF TIRUKKURAL

The real greatness of **Tirukkural** is its survival, even after the onslaughts of many *heterogenous creeds.* In the last two-thousand years, it never failed to attract any scholar or lover of wisdom. They have glorified **Valluvar** and his work, with scintillating tributes.

Every one of them, never failed to treat **Tirukkural** as a finest composition and acclaim **Tiruvalluvar** as a poet without any comparable bard in the Tamil country. The following pages of this handy volume will show that this *is not only the view of the* greatmen of Tamilnadu and India, but it is also the evaluative adjudication of the scholars of the world. Many illustrious minds have shed their powerful radiant light on this gem of the Tamils.

"Tamilnadu *gave Valluvar to the world!*
And thereby gained the *everlasting fame!"*

—Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathiar

TRIBUTES TO TIRUVALLUVAR

(a) Tributes By the Scholars of America and Europe

BARD OF UNIVERSAL MAN

"Sage Valluvar, priest of thy lowly clan
No tongue repeats, no speech
reveals thy name;
Yet, all things changing,
dieth not thy fame.

For thou art Bard of Universal Man;
And still thy 'book' above the waters wan,
Virtue, true wealth and joy, and being's
aim,
In Sweetest Mystic couplets doth proclaim,
Where winds Sea-wafted palmy forests fan.
Haply undreamed of 'visions' glad thine eyes
In realms beyond thy fabled 'Sevenfold
birth',
And clouds of darkness from thyspirit roll;
While lands far-off have heard with strange
surprise,

Faint echoes of thy song
Through all the earth
Men hail thee brother,
seer of spotless soul."

—**Dr. G.U.Pope**

SAGE AND SAINT

Tiruvalluvar is one of the venerated saints of Tamilnadu. Saint **Tiruvalluvar** gave us the laws of living a good life, a virtuous life. He describes to us how to live in the world, so the highest dharma could be fulfilled.

This was **Tiruvalluvar's** only work, and though it is relatively short, it is sufficient to bring reknown to a humble weaver, making him a venerated sage, and lawgiver of the Tamil Dravidian people.

—**Master Subramuniya**

DEIST

Men like **Thiruvalluvar** and **Siva Vakya** used their tongues and pens in favour of 'Deism and ceremonial Polytheism of the Brahmans.' It will seem strange to a Western reader that the **Cural** of **Thiru-**

valluvar should be the most venerated and popular book, south of the Godavari.

—Mr. C. E. Gover

GREAT SYNTHESIZER : TIRUVALLUVAR

The author of the **Kural** was a kindly, liberal-minded man and his poetry is a kind of synthesis of the best moral teachings of his age.

—Fr. Emmons E. White

WEAVER

Tiruvalluvar an out-caste weaver, wrote in the most difficult of Tamil makers a religious and philosophical work - the **Kural** - expounding moral and political ideals.

—Dr. Will Durant

WEAVER OF MADRAS

Tiruvalluvar (c. 2nd Century A.D.) was according to a tradition, a weaver living in Southern India. He was the reputed author of the **Kural**, a collection of 1330 moral maxims written in the Tamil Language. Others assert that **Tiruvalluvar** is not a name but a title borne by religious teachers of the lower castes. The **Kural** has been called the Tamil Veda and described as the most venerated and popular books south of the Godavari . . . the literary treasure, the Poetic Mouthpiece, the highest type of verbal and moral excellence among the Tamil People.

—Fr. H. A. Popley

FRIEND, PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE

Tiruvalluvar, the author of **Kural**, address neither the King, subject, nor priest, but man. He does not address man

either as the law-giver orprophet but as well-wisher, teacher andfriend. He neither prophesied nor spoke in hints and riddles; his words contained noshade of doubt; he had full conviction of the truth of what he said, both as an artist and thinker. The Kural of Tiruvalluvar is rightly considered as **Chef D' Oeuvre** of both Indian and world literature. This is due not only to the great artistic merits of the work, but also, and this is most important, to the lofty humane ideas permeating in, which are equally precious to the people all over the world, of all periods and countries.

—**Dr. Alexander Pyatigorsky**

COSMOPOLITAN

He **(Tiruvalluvar)** stands above all races, castes and sects and what he teaches in a general human morality and wisdom.

No wonder that the **Kural** *has not only* been much read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the West, ever since it has become known."

—Dr. M. Winternitz

A GREAT MAN

It is refreshing to think that a nation which produced so great a man (**Tiruvalluvar**) and so unique a work (**Kural**) cannot be a hopeless, despicable race. The morality he preached could not have growu except on an *essentially moral soil.*

—Rev. Dr. J. Lazarus

POET OF PRE-SANSKRIT AND NON-SANSKRIT TRADITION

It is more important that he was also a very integral part of the non-Sanskritic and Pre-Sanskritic Tamil tradition, this *fact is* seen not *only from his conception of*

'pleasure' which is so typically a reflexion of the **Akam genre,** but also from the all pervading pragmatic, this - worldly, empirical and to a great extent, humanistic and universalistic character of his particular conception of **dharma** and **niti**.

—Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

GENIUS OF THE WORLD

The weaver of **Mylapore**, was undoubtedly one of the great geniuses of the world; Complete in itself, the sale work of its author (the Kural) has come down the stream of ages, absolutely uninjured, hardly a single various reading of any importance being found.

In value it (Kural) outweighs the whole of the remaining Tamil Literature and is one of the selected number of great works which have entered into the very soul of a whole people and which can never die.

Sir A. Grant says, "Humility, charity and forgiveness of injuries are not described by Aristotle." Now these are everywhere forcibly inculcated by this Tamil Moralist.

—**Dr. G. U. Pope**

POET OF THE PEOPLE

The **Kural** shows him to be a man of the people. With simple tastes, of sturdy honesty, self-reliant, god-fearing and gifted with a sense of pawky humour. He loved the simple homelife of the labourer, whether weaver of tiller of the soil and a home with little children. The greatest virtues in his estimation were simple, kindness, truthfulness, sincerity, and harmlessness to all life. He was not in any sense an ascetic, but a shrewd man of the world, and he knew that many so-called ascetics were impostors and rogues. He was a keen

observer of nature and of the habits of birds and animals and used simple illustrations with telling effect.

—**Fr. H. A. Popley**

TIRUVALLUVAR'S POETIC EXCELLENCES

He throws the purity of Bunyan's English completely into the shade. No known Tamil work can even approach the purity of **Kural.** It is a standing rebuke to the modern Tamil. **Tiruvalluvar** has clearly proved the richness, melody and power of his mother tongue.

—**Rev. J. Lazarus**

WIZARD

The poet (**Tiruvalluvar**) in fact, stands above all races, castes and sects inculcating a general human morality and worldly wisdom. Not only the ethical content of the book but skill with which the author gives his aphorisms, a poetical setting in a difficult metre have evoked admiration.

—**Dr. A. A. Macdonell**

(b) Appreciations of the Scholars of Asia

MINISTERIAL ADVISOR

Tiruvalluvar is the greatest Tamil poet. From his name, he appears to have belonged to a class of ministers, advisors or seers of sacred diviner.

—**Thiru E. V. Singhan**

DIALECTIC THINKER

Tiruvalluvar, was a dialectic thinker. He was presumably sensed the danger in the situation and took upon himself the task of striking a balance between these two extremes of Material and Spiritual. Evidently he rejected the reversal to unalloyed materialism. Moreover, the new gospels had much to teach that was of lasting value and had already taken root in the hearts and minds of men. Thus he sought the obvious, the golden mean. He brought forth a matchless work of synthesis

between the two apparently opposing concepts of the spiritual and the material. Finally, the message had to reach the people at large. It had to be democratic in form, content and appeal. The form had to be new, even as its content of thought. The choice of the form of Kural was deliberate, despite its great limitations as a vehicle of didactic teaching. It did not have the imaginative appeal either of Buddhist Jataka tales or of Upanishad stories, or of Biblical parables, not to say of the later day absorbing epics and puranas. The success he made of in the epigrammatic form is a miracle in the history of poetical expression.

Morality (Ethics), Artha or Porul (Polity), Kama or Inbam (Love) and Moksha or Veedu (Liberation), he deliberately excludes the fourth objective and confines himself to the

first three. He thus sought to present only the earthly framework of a society - namely ethics, polity and love.

—**Mr. Shuzo Matsunaga**

The most interesting characteristic of the Kural-love songs is the independence of the body of a person. Heart, face, soul, eyes, hands, forehead, or even the Pallid complexion of the face shows their character uncontrollable by the person himself. Such an expression rouses deeper anp deeper emotions. Toward the end of the Kural love songs, we can see a vivid love quarrel between husband and wife caused by the sneeze of the husband. This description is so fresh and animated that I feel as if I were watching a home drama on T.V.

The Kural is the core of the spirit of the Tamil people. And the most remarkable point is that it is threaded through with "Love to the others." Do we have such a core of the spirit of the Japanese people? Before the war, the Imperial Proscription Education was the standard of our morality. But, it was denied because of the fear of enhancing militarism. Now, we do not have any racial bible which should be kept in the minds of all the Japanese people. I am seriously worrying about the future of our race whose material civilization has overwhelmed the spiritual one. As long as the Kural is kept in the minds of all the Tamil people, I think, their glory will last forever.

—Mr. Shuzo Matsunaga.

LITERATURE OF WISDOM

The title of his book **Tirukkural**, literally means 'Book of Sacred Couplets'; in this context, 'Sacred' is not to be understood as 'religious' or 'hieratic'; since **tiru** also means 'beautiful', 'elegant,' 'true' with the sense of 'revered,' while KURAL designates a couplet in a beautiful and elaborate versification.

This book occupies in the literature of the world, a place comparable to Confucian Analects, Plato's Dialogues, Aristotle's Ethics and Seneca's writings. . . . The Thirukkural belongs to the great books of the world, and it is the Tamil's **contribution** to the Wisdom Literature of the World.

—**Thiru E. V. Singhan**

(b) Sentiments of the Sons of India

LEGENDS

The author of the Sacred Kural was Tiruvalluvar, around whom many stories have been woven down the ages. He was an ideal householder, to whose Chast. Wife, Vasuki, his word was law. Many Sages were humbled by her, it is said. One story attributes Tiruvalluvar's parantage to a Brahmin father and his Pariah wife. He was a weaver by profession and lived in Mayilapur, a suburb of the city of Madras today. He was a friend of Elela Singan, a merchant prince engaged in maritime trade.

—Thiru K. C. Kamaliah,

Tiruvallvar has become a tradition by himself and various anecdotes and folk - stories have gathered around his name His wife's name is given as **Vacuki** and she is described as a embodiment of chastity.

—Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaran,

TRADITIONAL STORIES REFUTED

The Kernal of all this mythical yarn is to endow the peerless poet with an unenviable **Pulaya**-birth with a streak of possible Braman-blood in his melacha veins accompanied and unrelieved by an unedifying low breeding; and his fabled debut in thegreat Pandian metropolis is said to have been divinely pre - ordained to end the pride and destroy the prestige and position of the famous Tamil Sangam, which our poet-philosopher with divine intervention delibarately and inexorably humbled to the dust for ever. This Vulgar tale asserts that the poet's very first advent in Madura brought him a blazing fame as deservedly, as it proved the ignoble exit of the far - famed Tamil Academy into the eternal fog of unmerited oblivion.

—Dr. S. Somasundara Bharathiar

NAME OF VALLUVAR

Custom and Convention prescribed the use of personal names of men of emience, who were remembered only by their honorific surnames. And the author of kural has similarly been remembered only by his official surname by the admiring and grateful Tamilaham, whose very reverence to their great philosopher made them first avoid the familiar use of and in course of time really forget his personal name altogether. Anyway there is nothing in the name 'Valluvar' to warrant the Pulaya myth of the tale - mongers.

—**Dr. S. Somasundara Bharathiar**

ROYAL OFFICER

Valluvar was a term applied to the officers publishing the royal proclamations all around the capital city, riding on the

elephants with proclamation drums, as it is made clear in **Manimekalai.**

—Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaran

AGE OF VALLUVAR

The age of Ilanjed Chenni 'father of Karikala' contemporary of Ugraperuvaluthi should probably be fixed between 30 and 50 A. D. This is the age of the Kural when our Valluvar, the Prince of Moralists' produced it to the professors of the last Academy presided by Ugra Pandya.

—Thiru. D. Savariroya pillai

VENERABLE POET

The poet has presented his thoughts in verse of extreme beauty and delicacy. The combination of ideas, language and metre is unique. It is impossible to capture the elegance of his style and rhythm in translation. It can at best be a pale reflection of the original.

His teachings have been enshrined in the hearts of the Tamil people for countless generations and they have become a part of their Culture and part of their life. They might not always have followed him, but they have always loved, cherished and revered him.

—Thiru D. Savariraya Pillai

POET OF PERFECTION

To Sum up : According to this philosophy, the human society has now reached a stage of development in its pilgrimage towards perfection and he calls this stage **Illaram**. In this stage of evolution there is one social order which produces a moral climate. This social order must be maintained by this moral climate is to be there. Only under this moral climate, a man can

derive strength to move forward towards perfection, that is envisaged in Thuravaram.

Rev. J. Lazarus

POET OF MANKIND

Great thinkers belong to the world. Tiruvalluvar belongs not only to Tamilnadu but alsoto the whole of India, nay to the wholeworld. He wrote for the benefit of the whole mankind.

Sri. Sane Guruji.,

CREATOR AND CREATURE OF THE TIMES

It is important, however, to note that the close relationship discernible between the ethos of the work of Tirukkuṟaḷ and the ethos of the Caṅkan classics can be asserted. what is generally conceded in the càse of great men of history—that they are both the Creators and also the Creatures of

their times—may be said about Tiruvalluvar in relation to the Caṅkam Tamil Classics. The latter have full of references to the terms and expressions of Tirukkural. And, the kural itself reflects the values and ideals cherished in the Caṅkam period.

—Dr. S. Gopalan

MAN OF UNIVERSAL VISION

The picture of Tiruvalluvar that emerges from his work is that of a man of Universal vision and understanding but one who defies understanding merely in terms of caste obligations and station in life. It is quite possible that he was a man involved in and Committed to to action and that he was also a Centemplative and one who could identify himself with the 'law' and the poor, one who was not prepared to accord distinction for

mere learning unaccompanied by virtue, a citizen who was equally aware of his duties without an undue assertion of his rights, a warm human being sensitive in his personal relationships and above all, a wise man who was not without a word of advice alike to the ascetic and to the lovers.

—Dr. S. Gopalan

MAN OF THE PEOPLE

Tiruvalluvar's mind is so extraordinary that we would feel grateful and thrilled to see human life through his eyes. Valluvar contemplates the grand spectacle of the phenomenon of man in its earthly and casmic contexts and sees it in all its totality in the clear daylight of unclouded faith. He locates whatever makes for disharmony in inter - personal relationships and maps out a detailed code of conduct which would

bring about harmony within the individual and harmony without. He focuses on the emotional reverberations caused by human conduct on every aspect of human relationship between, say, son and father, husband and wife, citizen and the state, and soul and God.

Leaned on his gate he gazes—tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years,
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole.

—**Justice S. Maharajan**

POET OF THE WORLD

"Tamil Nadu gave unto the
World Valluvar
And won thereby great reknown."

—**Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi**

MONUMENT OF THE WORLD WISDOM

Tiruvalluvar, one of the greatest of Tamil poets and thinkers, who lived somewhere between the first century B. C. and the first century A. D., has given to the world his monumental work, Tirukkural, which is of perennial interest to the nations of the world.

The message of Tiruvalluvar is not pessimistic, but optimistic. He wants us to laugh, even amidst great dangers, for th*ɜ* is the only way to which dangers or sorrows can be overcome"

—Dr. A. Chidambaranatha Chettiar

POET OF DIVINE WISDOM

O Sov'ran Poet of the hoary South,
O Master Sage of sweet coupleted lore,
O Teacher Great of Truth and wisdorm's
store.

O Lofty Seer of household life serene.
For lovelier than Sham ascetic life,
Which harms and deludes self and world
alike,
O Nameless Bard whose name is Great and
Good.
The bright and precious Jewel of human
life,
The single work, a classic gem of Love.
And wealth and virtue, is unparalleled,
And revered by nations, great and small,
Of diverse faiths and Creeds the wide
world o'er
As Bible, Lay, Koran, as Zend Avesta,
As Aryan Vedas four, as word of God.
The model life, thy renown'd wife and
mate,
Thy Sacred verse and noble words Quoted,
So oft as apt and fit to illumine,
Shallows and deeps of varied life and true'

And Console minds afflicted much an hit,
Too hard by ills unthought and unforseen,
Shall live and serve as good cicerone.
In endless time to come as in aeens
For past and gone. O What a Mighty Mage!
Though, human born, thou art Divine,
indeed,
And worth our worship rapt and orison.

—Prof. M. S. Purnalingam pillai

POET OF A PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY

This Claim that the Tamils were undoubtedly in the vanguard of human progress and civilisation, is made not in any self adulation or out of vanity. It is done merely to mention the facts of history which serve as a back ground to introduce an immortal bard of Universal man. Thiru-valluvar in the correct perspective. Over

the centuries the ancient culture of the Tamils was subjected to an aggressive impact of other cultures from far and near, with the result a synthetic culture had been evolved, which had come to stay in the country. This was, indeed, inevitable when there was a fusion of races and a mingling of cultures. However, it was given to a Tamil Poet, Valluvar to present the lofty heritage of his ancient land in a manner acceptable to men of all ages informed by the spirit of free enquiry. The way of life of the Tamils as enshrined in his immortal work the kural, is based on the universal truths.

—Justice S. Maharajan

REVOLUTIONARY POET

"We all know that literature is the product of civilization. The literature reflects the age and culture whose fruit it is

But the unique feature of **Tirukkural** is that it transcends the age in which it was produced. From the historic point of view, one may say that the author of **Kural** was a revolutionary, both in his outlook and approach towards life. Perhaps the positive principles of ethics of the earlier times were clouded by spurious and supertitions doctrines gathered during the course of time, and the author in his attempt to ward of off these clouds, had made a remarkable contribution to the world literature that has witnessed the test of time."

—Dr. V. R. Nedunchezhiyan

SAGE

Tiruvalluvar—Sacred Prophet, Socrates of the East and author of kural, belonged to the valluva-weaver community and did pursue weaving and lived in Mylapore—(mylai—garden of peacocks) happily, with

his devoted wife Vasuki. Born to a Brahmin father and a low born mother, he and his sister Avvai leftan imperishable impact on all mankind through their writings and Tirukkural is reckoned as the universal vedam. Tiruvalluvar is the venerated sage and law - giver of the Tamil people. This weaver of mylapore is undoubtedly one of the greatest geniuses of the world.

—Dr G. N. Jaganatha Reddy

SAINT

"Thiruvalluvar was a Tamil Saint. Tradition says that he was a Harijan Weaver. He is said to have lived in the first century of the Christian Era. He gave us the famous Tirukkural, holy maxims described by Tamilians as the Tamil Veda and by M. Ariel as one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought. The

maxims number 1330. These have been translated into many languages. There are several English translations.

—**Mahathma Gandhi.**

UNIVERSAL BOOK

"The six Creeds of the days of kalladanar have since then ramified into six and sixty or more in our own days and promise to grow veritably into six hundred and sixty six in the future. But like the fixed stars in the distant spaces of the heavens, Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural seems to hold its place unalterably as the Universal Book of Humanity for all ages and climes."

—**Dr. K. Appadurai**

BIBLE OF MANKIND

The grandeur of a Milton, the grace of a Dante, the Universality of a Shakespeare, the sublimity of an Aristotle, the idealism

of a Plato and the moral fervour of a Marcus Aurelius are all to be found in a harmonious blending and appropriate proportion in this 'Bible of Mankind'. This Universal Character notwithstanding the kural is the Testament of the Tamils. It has been the fountain of inspiration to generations of geniuses saints and moralists, statesmen.

—Thiruvachakamani
K. M. Balasubramaniam

SAGE AND SEER

Tiruvalluvar, the great sage and seer of Tamilnadu lived in the Pre-Pallavan period (C. 5th Century).

Love in the Kural is an exciting pervading, transforming passion not a mere cult of body. He shows a keen sensitive ness, to the beauty of a woman as seen

through a lover's eyes and has a gift to make a genuine beauty blossom into fulness.

But the Kural reveals the author, the style in the man.

—Sri. H. N. Verma

SEER OF MANKIND

Not only does valluvar see life unrole in a continuous whole but also does he see with the eyes of a Seer what impedes the further evolution of man and how the impediments can be removed. He has eyes that miss nothing, eyes that can twinkle with humour and wit, Sarcasm and mischief, eyes which glow with righteous indignation and sparkle with serene and lofty wisdom, eyes which can make men fidget and women blush, eyes, which grow misty with tears for the poor, and sting the wicked.

—Justice S. Maharajan

YOGI

"The sage Tiruvalluvar was a 'rishi' who had the glimpse of real 'truth'. This 'yogin' of Tamilnadu addressed to the whole community of mankind without taking into account the caste, creed, people or belief. The **kural** has won appreciation from the scholars and thinkers of various nationalities."

—Dr. Ravindra Kumar Seth

MORAL PHILOSOPHER

It is the genius of Thiruvalluvar that in his moral code, the ethical principles are enunciated not as contents of a man's own will or merely as a subjective state of mind but as something that is objective, that can be tested with reference to its effect on the society. what will be the effect on others of a particular conduct of an individual.

This is the question that had been at the back of the mind of the author when he had enunciated the moral principles. If a man's conduct is in confirmity with the happiness of others, then that conduct is moral; if the effect of his conduct is injurious to others, then it is unethical. It is on this basis that the great teacher. Thiruvalluvar, has laid down his moral precepts in Thirukkural.

—Thiru. M. Shunmugasubramaniam

GREAT MORALIST

Tiruvalluvar deservedly ranks foremost among the poets and moralists of India; for he has had no superior or equal in either character.

—Thiru. Simon Casie Chetty

REVOLT AGAINST VARNASRAMA

The author of kural born in Tamil country in a vellala family must have keenly felt the onslaught of Vedic Culture on the culture of his native land. As againts this strict principle of Ahimsa in religion and in social matter the immigrant culture from the North brought the religion of animal sacrifice which was its central doctrine and also the the varnasrama Dharma. Secondly, as against the casteless social organisation of the Tamil country the vedic culture introduced varnasrama Dharma and interpreted this Dharma according to different castes assigning the occupation of Agriculture to the fourth caste of Sudra.

—Prof. A. Chakravarthy Nainar

GREATNESS OF VALLUVAR

Never before, nor since did words of such profound wisdom issue forth from any

sage in the Tamil land...**Valluvar**, the Tamil sage, excels each one of these ancients in his respective sphere. He makes humanity and love the cementing force of society, and considerations of birth are of no account to him. His political wisdom is characterized by a breadth of vision at once noble and elevating. The sexual love which he depicts with inimitable grace and delicacy is idealistic, even if it be schematic and mannered. Its romance is ethereal and carries us to an atmosphere where purity of emotion, freshness and beauty reign supreme.

—Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai

A SOCIAL PHILOSOPHER

From what has been said above, it is obvious that Tiruvalluvar is one of the greatest social philosophers of the ancient

world. He is basically interested in this world and not in the next. His philosophy advocates not only the personal conduct and salvation of the individual but the harmonious development of society. He is interested in the relationship between Man and Man and between Man and Society. He advocates the growth of social relationships and the intellectual, spiritual as well as the material development of individuals and groups. He strikes a balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of society.

—Thiru Kasthuri Sreenivasan

PRODUCT OF INDIAN CULTURE

Thiruvalluvar was one of the greatest product of Indian culture. The saint's dealism, his philosophy, humane practical sense and universal ethical code had

mingled into the main stream of Indian Culture, and had become part of the common cultural heritage and philosophers of India.

—**Dr. Zakir Hussain**

FLOWER OF TAMIL CULTURE

Thiruvalluvar himself was one of these rare great men who had their roots firmly in the history and culture of the Tamils of the Sangam age, who had made their own all that was good in the religious and social teachings that blew into Tamilnadu, from outside the state and country in those spacious days and, in addition, had their own characteristic vision of the future. Out of the catholicity of his spirit and the depth of his integrated thinking arouse the Kural, the moral line of which is not clouded by dogma or prejudice of any kind. If we see certain likenesses between

Valluvar's thought and those of the Buddha, Mahaveera, Plato, confucious, Kautilya and Vatsyayana, these are only justifiable absorptions by a subsequent thinker of ideas, of which he approves from among those that have preceded him and are available to him, or natural similarities in the working of great minds. But there are also basic differences and substantial originality of thought and expression far ahead of his times, particularly in respect of his treatment of Godliness, casteless society, importance of agriculture, taxation with people's consent and ennobling of physical love. That is the reason why Valluvar's Tirukkural has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the ages. Great Tamil epic writers like Ilangovadigal and Seethalai Sathanar and poets like Alathur Kizhar of Purananuru

fame, have quoted him from the 2nd century A.D.

—**Thiru. S. M. Diaz**

POET OF VARIOUS SECTS

Tiruvalluvar, the author of **Tirukkural** has been claimed by people of many faiths, including the Jains, the Hindus and the Christians. Tirukkural is quoted in early Tamil works such as Purananuru, and in Ṣilappatikaram and Manimekalai. Even though there is not sufficient evidence to fix the date of the work precisely, it is generally accepted that it is about 2000 years old. Tirukkural is a masterpiece of classical Tamil poetry and it has something to offer to people of different nations and times.

—**Dr. Gift Siromani**

SAGE OF JAINISM

The Tamil Jains claim that the author of the Kural was the famous kundakundaacavya who had epithets Vakragriva, Elaccarya, and Grdhrapicha and whose original name was Padmanandin. But he wrote his learned works only in Prakrit and he could not have been the author of this famous work in Tamil. Samaya Divakara, the author of the commentary on Nilakesi, cites this frequently as 'em-ottu' that is 'our authority' (e.g. 32, 6 comm.); but nowhere he ascribed this authoritative work to kundakunda.

—**Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai**

VALLUVAR AND GREAT PHILOSOPHERS

Greece gave birth to Homer and Socrates. The Tamil Land gave birth to Thiruvalluvar and Kamban. Kamban is the

Homer and Tiruvalluvar is the Socrates of Southern India. The literary glory of the Tamils rests on Tiruvalluvar and Kamban, not to speak of Auvaiyar - the Muse in human embodiment, and a host of others."

—Prof. T. Chelva Kesavaraya Mudaliar

LITTLE KNOWN TO THE NORTH INDIA

We may not all be aware even of the name of Sage Tiruvalluvar. North Indian people certainly do not know his name. Few saints have given to the people as much knowledge as he done in the minimum of words."

—Mahathma Gandhi

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Valluvar is a cosmopolitan citizen of the world except that he speaks and writes in Tamil.

—Thiru J. M. Nallaswamy Pillai

MASTER OF SONGS SUBLIME

I bow to thee, oh Master of song sublime,
Who foremost in creation's dawn did sing
Those songs, that in a changing world
still ring
Withwisdom rich and rare! The tide of Time
Bears not a richer waftage, than thy rhyme
Which fills, pervades man's life,
encompassing
Its wide extent like Vishnu's feet, bearing
Still the unsullied freshness of Earth's
prime.
Thy Kurals with the Upanishads stand !
The primal glories of our ancient Land
Pyramids of man's intelligence.
And monuments of his high moral sense!
Relies, should the petty race of man expire,
Of what did once his noblest acts inspire!

—**Thiru. T. B. Krishnaswami Mudaliar**

A PROPHET OF MANKIND

The immortality of the work is due to Tiruvalluvar's prophetic exhortations to his people to lead a good life which would exemplify the deepest humanity in them. The very fact that he chose the couplet verse form is interpreted by a scholar as a deliberate choice for mass communication.

He observes :

Valluvar was a democrat in thought and form. . . And so was the **Kural** metre chosen . . . it was the aptest medium of communication for the achievement of the poet's purpose.

—**Dr. S. Gopalan**

GREAT THINKER

Tiruvalluvar has been and will continue to be recognised as one of the great thinkers that **Tamilagam** has produced and

his work **Tirukkural** has been and will continue to receive the utmost consideration, study and thought by all interested in the philosophy, religion and the moral codes practised by Tamilians in ancient days.

—Dr. A. L. Mudaliar

AN IDEALIST

A moralist like Valluvar mentions his idealism in general terms as he does not also create new and 'desirable' institutions; he wishes to reform though occasionally but does not create; so his treatment of the polity is idealistic and not Utopian. The very wish to reform a system indicates the reformer's commitment to the system, as Luther's to Christianity and Marx's Secularism. If there is fundamental hostility to the bases of the system, the remedy

is not reformation but extermination, of which there is no suggestion in Valluvar.

—Thiru. N. Subrahmanian

IDEALIST AND REALIST

Valluvar *was a sage and seer,* a poet and scholar, an idealist and realist at once, he produced a body of doctrines, that is not only matchless as a work of synthesis in the entire world of literature but has also acquired unique in transcending time and space. For the problem he set out to solve are problems eternally recurring *life* affirmation and life-negation; and the **Kural** that he produced *had to be a philosophy* as a way of living and a way of living according to philosophy.

—Dr. B. Natarajan

VALLUVAR'S WIDER VISION

A study of his work reveals that he is largely indebted to well-known treatises in

Sanskrit such as Manu, Kautilya, Kamandikiya, Ayurvedic treatises and Kama-Sutra. Kural 41 and 47 emphasizing the importance of the Grahastha (house-holder) are based upon Manu III-78. Kural 58 describing the merits of a married woman who bestows loving care on her husband owes its idea to Manu V-155.

—**Dr. S. Gopalan**

AN IDEALIST

Tiruvalluvar may be regarded as an idealist in the sense that he believed that the true or the real is essentially spiritual and mental in nature. We cannot put any brand to his idealism; once we do so, we are treading on rather a slippery ground. But we may generally say that he belonged to the school which affirmed that reason and consciousness constituted the essence and complete nature of reality. When Tiruvalluar seems to convey the impression

that he believed in the universality of truth, we are reminded of the Socratic type of idealism. The method of mutual admiration which Socrates spoke about is nothing but comparison of notes in one's search for truth. The couplet under reference almost looks like tabulated Socratic wisdom because, Socrates was first among the philosophers who propagated the concept of universals in arriving at which the best method is the method of mutual admra-tion or examination of view-points with the view to accepting them or rejecting them. From out of this process of search for what is eternal is evolued every one of the universals. Like Socrates, Tiruvalluvar believed in the universality of truth.

—**Dr. N. Subbu Reddiar**

EGALITARIAN

Although Tiruvalluvar has touched upon every facet of life's problems, his

pronouncements in respect of the economy of the nation and its polity in all - its aspects are very vivid and marked. There are 125 couplets in Tirukkural that are directly concerned with economics. A study of these couplets indicates that Tiruvalluvar visualised an egalitarian society. Living as he did in a capitalistic society, he has not allowed the individual to succumb to avarice and greed. To him, means as well as ends should be pure and unquestionable. The trade should, under all circumstances, observe the business etiquette and fellow ethical injunctions.

—**Prof. M. S. Purnalingam Pillai**

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHER

Tiruvalluvar, the earliest and the illustrious social and moral philosopher of **Tamilnadu,** had a great quest for perfec-

tion. In his pursuit for perfection, he has attempted to organise the things of body, mind and soul into a whole. He has inter-related the activity of the human spirit, the artistic and ethical and the religious and rational into a perfect system. By the process of synthesising these three aspects of human endeavour, he has paved the way for the self-realisation of man.

In this aspect, he excels Plato and Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius and Montesque, Rousseau, Russell, Kant and Karl Marx and Buddha and Confucius. His philosophy of life revolves around the 'Radical Humanism' of M. N. Roy.

—Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu

GREAT TEACHER

His approach is unique and unlike many of a teachings that appeared before

and after him. For against the background of elaborate religious rituals of the Sangam civilisation, this new teaching ignored, not merely all the divinities and all fear of them and all auguries and beliefs of them, but also all religious institutions and the necessity for them. This teaching has no peg of a deity or god in particular to hang on. It stands absolutely by itself.

—Prof. G. Venkatachalam

DIFFERENCE IN APPROACH

In many respects he (Tiruvalluvar) differs from **Kautilya** the author of **Arthasastra** although it is commonly believed *and stated that* **Tiruvalluvar** *was* indebted to **Arthasastra** in some respects. It does not appear that **Tiruvalluvar** has based his ideas of Kingship and Government on **Kautilya**.

—Rao Sahib N. Murugesa Mudaliar

TIRUVALLUVAR'S CONTRIBUTION

"Though **Tiruvalluvar** lived about 2000 years ago, it does not seem he is dead. He is a contemporaneous presence in the Tamil country, influencing men thoughts and urging them to bring their conduct into greater and greater conformity with the high ideals, he set before them."

"None could disagree that he has shaped Tamil literature as no other Tamil poet has done. He has dominated the intellectual and literary landscape of Tamilnadu, and never, since his time has any man risen to the moral and spiritual height, that came to him, there was no one like him before or since. Except, perhaps, Kambar."

"He came to think surely, of mankind as including persons, who spoke other

languages than Tamil. He taught in the same language as Plato or Aristotle, confucius or Rousseau did in respect of ideas, in respect of conceptions of right and justice. What did he think of mankind and what does it matter what he thought of mankind? It matters because therein resides the quintessence for prosperity and peace in the social order, a quest which still eludes us if he was right, the rest of us were wrong.

—Justice S. Maharajan

RADICAL HUMANIST

*__Tirukkural__, the most popular and oft-quoted Tamil classic is one of the great books of the world.

Let us ponder over the Reasons for such greatness of **Muppal**. It has been composed by a radical humanist, who addresses the common man, not as a priest

or pontiff. He appeals to the mind and heart of the man. He persuades him to lead a virtuous life that will ensure the welfare of mankind.

—**Prof. K. Anbazhakan**

PROGRESSIVE THINKER

Our Bharat was not in lack of thinkers like. **Thiruvalluvar** in those days. There were **Bodhayana, Apasthamba, Asvalayana, Kautilya** and **Parasara,** besides **Manu,** the law giver. But the mind of these thinkers was so saturated with communal feelings called **Varnashrama Dharma** that they could not extricate themselves from bias. They thought and did every thing in terms of caste and community. Even the author of the famous **Bhagavat Gita,** who devotes a separate chapter to the castes and the respective communal duties. **Berthru Hari,** the author

of **Neethi Sathagam,** is not free from this mental distemper.

—Prof. Avvai Duraisamy Pillai

MESSIAH

Tiruvalluvar, the author of **Tirukkural** hails from Tamilnad, the southern - most part of India,and his immortal work is written in Tamil, one of the ancient living languages of the world. **Tirukkural** begins with the first letter of the Tamil language 'Aa' and ends with the last letter 'In'. The medium of language does not affect its universality. **Tirukkural** is the essence and embodiment of universal life. It is not only the "Ethical Bible of the Tamils"but the "Bible of Bibles" to the whole world. It is not Tamilnad alone that **Tiruvalluvar** represents. He is the messiah of the entire universe.

—Thiru. S. Padmanabhan

GREAT THINKER

From these, we can see that **Thiruvalluvar** is the only great thinker superior to those law givers and moralists mentioned before and his views are in tune with the modern sociological trends which tend to a formation of a castellss and classless community, free from all types of distinctions by virtue of birth or pratice. Sublimation of life by following the natural rules of conduct is the sole aim of **Tirukkural** and it does not place any religious or political faith or thought, as the be-all and the end-all of life. It is in pursuance of this aim that **Valluvar** takes the whole human society into consideration and wants to establish it on the bed-rock of moral virtue. The unit of society according to him, consists of husband and wife. If the man and woman of a family-unit are well qualified to lead a virtuous life, the whole

human society, on the other hand, will make an ideal society enjoying permanenit peace and pleasure.

—Prof. Avvai Duraiswamy Pillai

CHERISHED WISH

*Let us go to the nooks and corners of our villages with **Tirukkural** in our hands.

Let us tell the people the greatness underlying in **Tirukkural**.

Convey the message of **Valluvar,** which has not yet explained to our masses.

We will make every strenuous efforts to place **Tirukkural** in the first rank of world literature, which has not yet been undertaken. This requires for a chalked out Five Year Plan of implementation. This calls for an intensive devotion, sustained interest and dedication to inculcate and instrust the lofty ideals of Tiruvalluvar, at least in Tamilnadu.

—Arignar Anna (1949)

2

TRIBUTES TO TIRUKKURAL

(a) Remarkable Eulogies Of the European And Eurasian Scholars

A BEACON-LIGHT

*He (**Tiruvalluvar**) shines as a star in the darkness of night, a lovely flower in the desert, a light that drives the gloom of ignorance and a beacon - light to the whole world.

Fr. C. Beschi

EXCELLENT ETHICAL WORK

The author (**Valluvar**) taught ethical doctrine on singular purity and beauty; which so for as I know, be equalled in the sanskrit literature of the North.

—Dr. Vincent A. Smith

APPLE OF GOLD

No translation can convey an idea of its charming effect. It is truly an apple of gold in the network of silver.

—Dr. Graul

★ This asteric mark represents the, passages translated from Tamil by the editors.

A GEM OF THE WORLD LITERATURE

Tiruvalluvar's Kural, the 1330 short sentences on the three aims of life-*Dharma*, Artha, Kama, is one of the gems of world literature. Buddhists, Jains, Vaishnavas and saivas have claimed the pariah sage and poet of the Tamil land as their own. But he belongs to none of them or rather to all of them. For he stands above all races, castes and sects, and what he teaches, is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the *cural has not only become* much read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known.

Sage Tiruvalluvar should not be styled the unknown sage of Mylapore, for he has long been known for beyond the borders of his mother country.

—Dr. M. Winternitz

MASTERPIECE OF WORLD LITERATURE

I have greatest interest in the study of **Tirukkural**. This masterpiece of Tamil and of world literature was very often translated in a number of European languages.

In that famous and admirable book we find at first the **Aram** section, illustrating without any sectarian, religious bias, an ideal of good order of universal human interest . . . In any case, **aram in Tirukkural** is the standard Tamil ideal of life, not ignoring various **dharmas** of Aryan India; but astonshingly fixed in Tamilnad.

—**Dr. Jean Filliozat**

EXPRESSIONS OF HUMAN THOUGHT

The **Kural** is the masterpiece of Tamil literature. One of the highest and purest expressions of human thought.

That which, above all, is wonderful in the **Kural** is the fact that its author addresses himself without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind; the fact that he formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason; that he proclaims in their very essence, in their eternal abstractness, virtue and truth; that he presents, as it were in one group, the highest laws of domestic and social life; that he is equally perfect in thought, in language and in poetry in the austere metaphysical contemplation of the great mysteries of the Divine Nature as in the easy and graceful analysis of the tenderest emotions of the heart. **—Dr. M. Ariel**

WISDOM OF INDIA

The contents of the work represent the general aphoristic wisdom of India and do not belong to any particular sect.

—Dr. J. Murdoch

EMANATIONS OF HUMAN HEART

The **Kural**, one of the great books of the World, one of those singular emanations of human heart and spirit which preach positive love and forgiveness and peace.

—Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

As regards the Kural itself stands on its merits. The purity of its Tamil, the richness of its diction, the lofty tone of its morality, the theistic and unsectarian nature of its theology the endless variety of topics discussed in its one hundred and thirty three chapters and the profound esteem in which it is held by all classes of Tamil speaking Hindus are too well-known to need praise or comment.

—Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

MESSAGE OF TIRUVALLUVAR

The idea of active love did arise in the popular ethics of India in fairly ancient times we know from many stories we meet in her literature and especially through the ethical maxims found in the Kural, a work which probably belongs to the second century A.D,

Kural means short strophe. The work is written in the Tamil language . . . . what a difference between the **Kural** and the Laws of Manu, which originated some few centuries before it! In the latter, under the dominance of the Brahamanic spirit, world and life affirmation is still tolerated along-side world and life negation. In the **Kural** world and life - negation is only like a distant cloud in the sky. In 250 maxims - they form the concluding part of the work- earthly love is lauded. Later times, because

they cause offence, interpret them allegorically as concerning the love of the soul to God.

In the ethics of the **Kural**, as in those of the Laws of Manu, the idea of reward has a place. The *way of virtue is recommended because it leads to a better reincarnation or to liberation from re-birth.* Nevertheless, ethics in the **Kural** are not so entirely dominated by the idea of reward as in Brahmanism, Buddhism and the Bhagavad-Gita. We already find here the knowledge that good must be done for its own sake. It shines out from variou *maxims......*

Whilst the Bhagavad-Gita in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining in active life that it is in accordance with the order of the Universe, the **Kural** justifies it - what an advance - by

the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good.

According to the **Kural** duty is not confined, as in the Bhagavad-Gita to what the caste calling involves but consists in general in all that is good. Maxims about joy in activity, such as one would not expect from the Indian lips, bear witness to the strength of the world and life affirmation present in the **Kural**.

Like the Buddha and the Bhagavad-Gita the **Kural** desires inner freedom from the world and a mind free from hatred. Like them it stands for the commandment not to kill and not to damage. It has appropriated all the valuable ethical results of the thought of world and life negation. But in addition to this ethic of inwardness, there appears in the **Kural** the living ethic of love.

With sure stroke, the **Kural** draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity. On the most varied questions concerning the conduct of man to the world its utterances are characterized by nobility and good sense. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.

—**Dr. Albert Schweitzer**

VISION OF AN IDEAL HUMANITY

One cf the earlist sets of moral aphorisms exists not in Sanskrit. but in Tamil. It has been called the Tamil Veda, the Kural, the **Muppal**, or the maxims of the poet, **Tiruvalluvar** (**Valluvar**, Second Century C.E.?). Esteemed by Schweitzer as the "ideal of simple ethical humanity" and as "lofty wisdom", the collection of the **Kural** sums up the ethical dharma of the classical period of Tamil Literature. It also deals

with the practical details of politics and love. Prescriptions under dharma (as righteousness) feature the householder's or mature stage of life, offspring, the husband's primacy, and energetic efforts in the face of Karma (as the law of moral compensation). Injuring others by speech, envy, or fornication is, contrasted with uprightness, forgiveness, ahimsa, (non-violence), and a form of the golden rule found in many cultures. "When a man hath felt a pain for himself, let him take care that he inflicteth it not on others".

—**Dr. Roderic Hindery**

COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK

Tirukkural is the well known literary composition in the **Sangam** classics. This work proclaims the basic principles for the moral and material life of the people. The aphoirsms about 'loving-kindness' reveal

the humane approach of the poet to the problems of life.

The lofty ideals that are enshrined in thus didactic work transcends the barriers of race, creed, place and time. Besides, this universal and cosmopolitan outlook, **Tirukkural** shines supreme in its poetic excellences.

Dr. Wilfried Noelle

MANDATORY MAXIMS

The **Kural**, on the other hand all the *time stays at the level of general principles*, i.e., what *may* be called a *mandatory ethics*.

—Dr. E. H. Hopkins

ENSHRINED IN THE HEARTS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

The **Kural** consists of 2660 lines dealing with the three stock subjects Virtue, wealth and pleasure.

The sayings (of this work) are enshrined in the hearts of the common **folk.**

—**Dr. H. G. Rawlinson**

LESSONS OF WISDOM

No thing in the whole compass of human language, can equal the force and terseness of the distiches in which the author of the **Kural** conveys the lessons of Wisdom.

—**Rev. P. Percival**

MYSTIC COUPLETS

Kurral has entered into the very soul of a whole people. It proclaims sweetest mystic couplets on virtue, truth, wealth and joy. **Valluvar** is a seer of spotless souls.

—**Dr. G. U. Pope**

LITERARY MASTERPIECE

Tamil is one of the languages very much in use, not only in India, but also in

other parts of Asia and even Africa. In its literature are many gems of learning and wisdom. The **Tirukkural**, for example, a Tamil work of the first or second century, has been translated into various languages, and has been studied and praised all over the world. I am happy that this valuable work is being translated into Malay and Chinese.

—Hon'ble Tunku Abdul Rahman

GUIDANCE TO WORLDLY WISDOM

A third type of early writing is exemplified by the **Kural** (literally couplet) perhaps the most widely known Tamil classic. This is a work of didactic morality whose 1330 couplets are remarkable for their economy and clarity of style, for the wide range of human situations for which they provide guidance and for their unique blend of worldly wisdom and idealistic ethics.

—Dr. Leigh Lisker

THE WORLD HAILS SACRED KURAL

Tirukkural has been extolled by savants of East, West as a unique guide to universal existence.

The **Kural** of Thiruvalluvar is a poetical work on morals of great merit.

—Rev. Elijah Hoole

SACRED KURAL

The sacred **Kural**, in all its aspects appears to be a **Hindu Kural**.

—Leo Tolstoy

GREAT LITERATURE OF THE TAMILS

Of possibly the same period as the first few books of **Tirumurai** are the "Eighteen minor works." Largely didactic, these include the well-known collections of aphorisms, **Tirukkural**, by **Tiruvalluvar**. This work is highly esteemed by the Tamilians, and there are several translations.

—Dr. John R. Marr

CHARMING EFFECTS OF KURAL

No translation can convey any idea of its charming effect. It is truly an apple of gold in a net-work of silver.

—Dr. Graul

STRUCTURE OF KURAL

"It was one of the couplets in the third part (Kamattuppal) of the poem referring to the two looks of a maid-the one which kills and the other which cures the looked that led Dr. Graul to admire Tamil poetry and study the Kural.

The Kural is composed in the purest Tamil. In about 12,000 words which the poet has employed to convey his thoughts there are scarcely fifty of Sanskrit Origin. He throws the purity of Bunyan's English completely into the shade. No known Tamil work can even approach the purity of **'Kural'.** It is a standing rebuke to the

modern Tamil. Tiruvalluvar has clearly proved the richness, melody and power of his mother-tongue.

The '**Kural**' cannot be improved nor its plan made more perfect. It is a perfect mosaic in itself. The slightest change in the size, shape or colour of a single stone would mar the beauty of the whole.

It is refreshing to think that a nation which has produced so great a man and so unique a work cannot be a hopeless, despicable race. The morality he preached could not have grown except on an essentially moral soil. To those, therefore, who labour for the salvation of the tamil people, the '**Kural**' must be a work of peculiar nay, intense interest."

—Rev. J. Lazarus

OLDEST LITERATURE

The Oldest surviving vernacular literature is in the Dravidian language, Tamil, which includes works possibly as old as the first century of the Christian Era. The best known classical Tamil work is the **Kural** ("Aphoristic Stanzas") by the weaver Tiruvalluvar, who lived some time between the first and fifth centuries of the Christian Era.

—**W. Norman Brown**

FINEST COMPOSITION

The **Kural** of **Tiruvalluvar**, a work consisting 1330 distichs, or poetical aphorisms, on almost every subject, connected with morals and political-economy and which is regarded by all Tamils (and perhaps justly) finest composition of which the Tamils boast, appears to be not only the

best but the oldest Tamil work of any extent which is now in existence.

—**Dr. R. Caldwell**

FAVOURITE WORK

In its own land, the **Kural** owes its popularity as much to the beauty of its versification as to its morality, but it is in its breadth of view and its speaking that to the heart of men, must make it a favourite work with the world at large.

—**Dr. R. C. Temple**

COMPOSITION OF A SINGLE POET

Tirukkural is an integral homogeneous work of art, the author of which, addresses either king, subject nor priest but men. And he (Tiruvalluvar) does not address man either as law giver or prophet, but as a well-wisher, teacher and friend.

—**Dr. Alexander Pyatigorsky**

CLASSICAL COMPOSITION

The style of the **Kural** was matchless comparable only with the perfection of the style in Greek; the **Kural** was to Graul the pear of pearls in this old and rich classical literature of the Tamilians" — as also in ourtime the **Kural** was called "The greatest master-piece of Tamil Literature and according to our learned editor, embodying" the rationalisation and synthesis of the wisdom and ideas of the earlier Tamil Literature.

—Dr. Arno Lehman

EXEMPLARY WORK

Tiruvalluvar, the author of the **Kural**, occupies first place as a moralist among the Tamils. Indeed it is generally acknowledged that there is no treatise equal to the **Kural** in any Indian language.

—Dr. John Murdoch

ECLECTIC WORK

The teaching of **Tiruvalluvar** is however, purely eclectic and inculcates such principles as are common to all systems of morality.

—Dr. R. W. Frazer

SUBJECT-MATTER OF TIRUKKURAL

The **Kural's** primary themes touch on the rational form of the process of moral consciousness and on the substantive matter of giving. Destructive conduct like gambling, also a pet object of vedic and later Indian criticism, can be avoided by learning from its effects: Similarly, the consequences of poverty are not o blessing, but a curse (Nos. 751,1045). Greed is a worse curse; the 'feelings of I and mine'' being ''nought but vanity and pride'' (No. 346). It is giving and sharing which makes the world go round Without it.

Dr. Roderic Hindery

HUMAN RELATIONSHIP—SUBJECT MATTER OF KURAL

Man in the totality of his relationship's is the subject of the Kural. After a 'cosmic' introduction, which praises God, rain, supermen, and virtue, the author of the book turns towards man, whose personality is gradually unfolded in "ever expanding concentric cycles" within the family with his wife and children, within the community with his friends, and within his country in his relationship towards the ruler and the state. Man is shown not in a static state but in development, and the force that is behind this dynamism is sympathy, even love, manifesting itself through kind thought, sweet words, and right actions.

—**Dr, Kamil Zvelebil**

STYLE AND FORM

The **Kural** consists of 1330 terse and vivid couplets in the metric form known as the Kural venba, one of the most distinctive and difficult of Tamil poetical metres. This is thought by some scholars to be an imitation of the Sanskrit sutra form. The Kural is the earliest extant work in this metre, and the poet reveals a complete mastery of this metrical form. The first line of each couplet consists of four metrical feet, and the second of three, the last foot in the second line being a peculiar kind of in complete fo ot.

—Fr. H. A. Popley

METRICAL FORM

The **Kural** owes much of its popularity to its exquisite poetic form. The brevity rendered necessary by the form gives an oracular effect to the utterances of the

great Tamil 'Master of Sentences". They are the choicest of moral epigrams. Their resemblance to gnomic poetry of Greece is remarkable as to their subjects, their sentiments and the state of society when they were uttered. Something of the same kind is found in Greek epigrams, in Martial and the Latin elegiac verse. There is a beauty in the periodic character of the Tamil construction in many of these verses that red minds the reader of the happiest efforts of propertius".

—Dr. G. U. Pope

CRISP COUPLETS

A still more famous Tamil poem, written under Jain influences, is the **Kurral** of the pariah weaver, **Tiruvalluvar**, who lived on the Coromandel coast, near Madras. The poem treats of virtue, wealth, and love, in "a string of short, epigrammatic verses,

rivalling, in their crisp and cutting vigour, the soft, languid grace of the Naladiyar.

—**Mr. Herbert H. Gover**

SUPERB LOVE POETRY

As a work of literary art, reveals a single structural plan, and looks like a work of a single master... In the erotic couplets of the third part (**Kamathuppal**), the teacher, the preacher in **Valluvar** has stepped aside and the poet speaks almost the language of the superb love poetry of the classical Age."

—**Dr. Kamil Zvelebil**

THE KURAL IN TAMIL LIFE AND LITERATURE

From the earliest times down to the present day the **Kural** has been one of the most-quoted literary works of the Tamil land. The terse, vivid couplets lend them-

selves so aptly to memorisation and quotation, and there is a charm about them that makes us to repeat them again and again. It has already been shown that it is quoted often in the literature produced in the years immediately succeeding the composition of the work, and from that time we find it continually quoted in all the best literature.

—Fr. H. A. Popley

IDEALS OF COMMUNISM

In fact there is a great deal in the **Kural** which breaths the spirit of the best in Communism.

—Fr. H. A. Popley

TEST-BOOK

Though more than fifteen hundred years old, this rare collection of precepts, conveyed in the style of unequalled poetry,

has lost none of its original flavour among the people in one hundred and thirty three chapters, it treats almost of every variety of subjects pertaining to the relations and duties of life, forming a test-book of indisputable authority.

—**Dr. P. Ward**

CONSCIENCE IN PRINT

Tirukkural is a detailed and comprehensive book of virtue which guides us, not by laying down the law, but by throwing challenge upon challenge to the conscience of man in the form of its many *profoundly* appealing observations upon every moral issue. Indeed, it may otherwise be called the **printed conscience.**

—**Brother Lucien**

SIGNIFICANCE OF KURAL

Conjoined with these charming, Veda-like praises of sharing one's wealth is an

invitation to a sustained outpouring of one's wider resources, if not one's very self: Behold the men that alter not in their affection for their old friends: even enemies will look upon them with tenderness.

In contrast to the **Kural's** specific ethical norms, other portraits of moral instruction were concealed in only the lightest shades, two of which were Vatsyayana's Kamasutra and Canakya-Kautilya's Arthasastra. In his summary and analysis of the former treatise, which deals not with love or friendship in general, but with erotic love in particular, Sushil K. De makes two deductions: 1) the Kamasutra discloses the existence of a floating mass of previous tradition on erotica; 2) it overshadows later imitations.

Dr. Roderic Hindery

READ THE ORIGINAL TEXT

Tirukkural is a great work; and its author must have been a great man, and a great genius;...

Let it be said in conclusion that it is almost impossible to truly appreciate the maxims of the Kural through a translation. **Tirukkural** must be read and re-read in Tamil. This fact, too, reveals something about the nature and degree of its poetic excellence.

—**Dr. Kamil Zvelebil**

(b) Observations of the Elites of India

PEARLS FROM THE OCEAN OF TAMIL WISDOM

*Limpid style with vibrant expression
in Tamil,
Delicious whenever we taste it;
Pleasant it is to contemplate on the
lofty ideals,
That radiate with the splendour, of Virtue,
Polity and Love!
That is the work of **Tiruvalluvar**;
The world has achieved greatness by the
birth of **Valluvar** the Saviour of mankind.
To give a new orientation to the culture of
the Tamils,
Valluvar dived deep into the ocean of
Tamil wisdom,
Brought the peerless pearls of one thousand
three hundred and thirty to the shore,
Adorned and adored the Virgin
Mother - the Tamil Muse, with great vigour
and devotion to her

—**Paventhar Bharathidasan**

TEXT-BOOK ON MORAL LIFE

It is a text-book of indispensable authority on moral life. The maxim's of **Valluvar** has touched my soul.

—Mahathma Gandhi

PRAGMATIC SOCIAL THINKER

*Those who study **Tirukkural** with a discerning mind, will definitely imbued with the spirit of self-respect. It teaches the principles of political science as well as polity, social awareness and the economic values of life.

The supreme aim of composition of **Tirukkural** appears to be the instruction of good habits and inculcation of lofty ideals based on pragmatism that will guide the mankind in the right-direction, and teaches the maxims of moral life. Therefore it has been claimed as the only scripture that

attracts the attention of all people of the world without any reservations.

It envisages a new social order based on liberty, equality and fraternity and thus it ensures a life of Universal Brotherhood.

—**Periyar E. V. Ramasami**

FACETS OF TIRUKKURAL

*When we cut the diamond to various shapes in order to make it very bright and glitter with radiance, it will shine with brilliance in several shades of colour. Likewise when we study deeply and undertake research in **Tirukkural's** various aspects, there will emerge new and enlightening ideas, which will throw new light on the wisdom of the Tamils.

—**Dr. Arignar Anna**

GOSPEL FOR A TRUE LIFE

Tamil language has an old tradition extending over thousands of years.

Tirukkural, our immortal Tamil classic is a gospel of true living, which by its ethical content, and universal appeal is indeed an epitome of the cultural creativity of all man-kind.

—**Kalaignar Dr. M. Karunanidhi**

One of the most outstanding of the Tamil classics is the '**Kural**'. The '**Kural**' contains the maxims of the Saint **Tiru-valluvar**, who is said to have been one of the greatest of poets and philosophers who lived about the first century A.D. The excellence of this work has been appreci-ated by great scholars of all lands and the '**Kural**' has been translated into many languages, outstanding of which are Latin, German, English and French.

—**Dr. A. L. Mudaliar**

The **Kural** is one of the finest products of Indian culture. Its author

Tiruvalluvar was a South Indian Pariah and flourished probably about 200 A.D. Though born of an untouchable, **Tiruvalluvar** combined the wisdom of a statesman and law-giver with the spiritual vision of a saint. His **Kural** is a veritable treasure-house of good counsels for the house-holder, and the king as well as the man seeking after beatitude or liberation. Thus it is not only a great book of Indian, but of world literature as well.

—Sri Manmohan Ghosh

THE GUIDE BOOK

It is the duty of individuals and groups to study this guide book of ethics and honour the author and his work.

—Sardar Ujjal Singh

A TREATISE ON THE ART OF LIVING

Tirukkuraḷ is a treatise **par excellence** on the art of living. **Tiruvalluvar**, the

author, diagnoses the intricacies of human nature with such penetrating insight, perfect mastery and consummate skill absorbing the most subtle concepts of love and modern psychology, that one is left wondering at his sweep and depth.

—Dr. K. M. Munshi

THE HOLY THIRUKKURAL

The teachings are eternal inspiration and guide to Tamilians.

—Sir. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar

SACRED BOOK

In Saint Thiruvalluvar's sacred book, the Thirukkural, one can find all that is best in the poems of the world; and this single work will certainly raise aloft the Tamil Literature in the esteem of all literature-loving nations.

—Dr. V. S. Chengalvaraya Pillai

SCRIPTURE FOR ALL RELIGIONS

The fact that Tamil classic Tirukkural is claimed by different religious sects indicates its catholicity. Its emphasis on **Ahimsa** or non-violence in its varied application, ethical, economic and social shows the importance that ancient Tamil culture gave to it. **Tirukkural** is used by the Buddhists and the Jains, Saivites and Vaishnavites. It is called **Podumarai** or common Scripture.

—**Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**

BARD OF MANKIND

After reading **kural**, we will realise that Indian culture all over the country is one. The art of this great country is full of the same blood. Great thinkers belong to the world. Tiruvalluvar belongs not only to Tamilnadu, but to the whole of India,

nay, to the whole world. He wrote for the benefit of the whole mankind.

—**Sri. Sane Guruji**

GREATEST DIDACTIC WORK

The **kural** is one of the didactic poems of India. The treatment of **Muppal** or the Trivarga of Dharma, Artha and Kama, the sage wisely leaving the consideration of the fourth varaga of the Caturvarga; Viz;, Moksha, to individuals according to the way in which they reacted towards the unseen reality.

—**Dr. Sunitakumar Chatterji**

SACRED SCRIPTURE

The work itself has been the subject of reverent study ever since its appearance People of all ages, from children to old men, of all sorts and conditions, and of all religious persuasions have been devoutly

studying this work, that followers of every religion began to claim him as their own. In short, he became a universal poet and his work became a universal work, appealing to the widest human interests and the simplest human emotions. when law courts were first instituted in our country, judges and lawyers used to cite the *kural* as authority. Like the Bible, it was held sacred and used in administering oath to witnesses in courts. Even at the present day, it is studied as much as ever and it has been translated into several European languages.

—Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai

QUINTESSENCE OF WISDOM

Tirukkural is perhaps the most outstanding Tamil work to be translated into many Indian as well as foreign languages.

It is known as the 'Tamil Veda', Tirukkural presents the distilled wisdom of a culture. The overall theme is the art of living. The stanzas are musings on man's behaviour by Tiruvalluvar, a saintly householder, who flourished between the first and the third century, B. C.

As **Tirukkural** aims at making available the quintessence of the accumulated wisdom of a culture, its author is likely to assimilate freely from all material that is known to him. To see the influence of Jainism, Buddhism, the Smritis, etc. or to trace a Stanza, a line or a half-line to some Sanskrit source would no doubt be an interesting and rewarding exercise, but it can be overdone also.

—Dr. Sunita Kumar Chatterji

THE AGE OF TIRUKKURAL

*In the light of the above facts, we can arrive at the following conclusions: (1) From the linguistic and literary aspect **Tirukkural** *reveals* the later developments of Tamil *language and literature, which* could not be found in **Tolkappiyam,** the earliest Tamil grammar. Hence, it is clear that **Tirukkural** is posterior to **Tolkappiyam.** (2) Since the age of **Tolkappiyam** has been fixed as the third century B.C., then **Tirukkural** would have been composed later than the third century B.C. (3) The Sangam Classics, viz; the Ten Idylls, the Eight Anthologies and the twin epics are assigned to the early centuries of the Christian Era. (4) Many of the phrases, lines, ideas and couplets of **Tirukkural** have been profusely used in the Sangam Classics, which bear ample

testimony to the fact that **Ţirukkural** would have been composed earlier than these anthologies and the Twin epics.

So it is clear that **Tirukkural** might have been composed earlier than these literary compositions, i.e., in the pre-Christian Era. Hence, it is reasonable to assign the period between B.C. 100 and the down of the Christian Era, as the probable period for the composition of **Tirukkural**.

—**Dr. M. Rajamanickam**

A GUIDE

Its **(Tirukkural)** inimitable tersenes,s its combination of literary grace and philosophic and psychological subtlety, its gracious and yet penetrating outlook on life's problems, and its intensely practical approach make this series of aphorisms, a

source of delight to the *mind and a guide* and solace for the soul. . . . The **Tirukkural** bears comparison with the highest efforts of the Greeks, the French and the English in the domain of epigrams nda maxims and aphorisms of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhatruhari but in economy of expression allied with profoundity of thought, it is supreme.

—Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

FINE PRODUCT

Scholars well versed in **Tolkappiyam** and **Cankam** classics will readily agree to the view that **Tirukkural** is the fine product of Tamil civilization and culture whose origin and periodical evolution are still shrouded in mystery.

—Dr. V. Sp. Manickam

FRESHNESS OF KURAL

They (Kural couplets) are not limited to the people of any one nation, or of any one language or of any one period but they will remain alive and fresh as long as the human race survives.

—**Dr. Ramanlal C. Shah**

TREASURE OF THE TAMILS

Tirukkural was a treasure house of worldly knowledge, ethical guidance and spiritual wisdom. In the majority of its 1330 couplets even where the theme was common place the treatment was artistic and the play of sentiment, image and sound had a perenial interest.

—**Dr. Zakir Hussain**

CLASSIC OF HUMANITY

One of the most outstanding of the Tamil classics is the **Kural**. The **Kural**

contains the maxims of the Saint **Tiruvalluvar. . . .** The message all humanity and at no time is such a message more needed than at present. The excellence of this work has been appreciated by great scholars of all hands.

—Dr. A. L. Mudaliar

NATIONAL SCRIPTURE :
TIRUKKURAL

Our Mother India has National Anthem, National Flag and National Bird. It is, but appropriate that Mother India should have a national scripture.

The sacred Vedas and the divine Gita are undoubtedly great works, but they are **per se** caste-ridden, religious, mystical, pessimistic, litergical and lays tress on the other world.

Tiruvalluvar stands above all races castes and sects and what he teaches is general human morality and wisdom.

The observations of the doyens of modern thought of the world clearly bear ample testimony to the universal outlook and humanistic fervour of **Tirukkural**.

No doubt, it will convince the impartial and discerning readers that of all the Indian classics, **Tirukkural** is well suited to be named as the National Scripture of India.

—Dr. V. Sp. Manickam

NATIONAL LITERATURE OF INDIA

Tirukkural reflects the culture of the Tamils in particular and the culture of the Bharat in general.

Tiruvalluvar was one of the great thinkers, whose catholic spirit rose above all denominations of caste, creed, language

and country, whose vision was not clouded by dogmas and prejudices of any kind. Hence, has been called as the 'Bard of Universal Man' by Dr. G. U. Pope.

But, one can find the traits of national thought such as Ahimsa, the doctrine of **Karma**, the importance of the Domestic life, Hospitality and the unity in diversity in **Tirukkural**, which envisaged a new social order based on humanism which sounds so modern.

Valluvar inculcates the freedom of thought, speech and worship in several aphorisms which have been ensured by the 'Fathers of Indian Constitution' to the citizens of the Republic of India. Besides these features, **Kural** does not propagate the doctrines of any particular religion. So, it is the only literary composition and didactic work in India that teaches and preaches

he value of secularism, which appears to be the most significant aspect of our Indian Constitution.

In the light of the above facts, **Tirukkural** alone deserves in the present context, to be recognised as the 'National Literature' of India.

—Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

The purity of **Kural**, the richness of its dictum, the lofty tone of its morality, the theistic and unsectarian nature of its theology are some of the beauties of **Kural**. Standard works of this kind are land marks and guides in our journey through life.

—Prof. P. Alalasundaran

RELEVANCE TO THE PROBLEMS OF MODERN LIFE

When I read a verse here and there, as I do daily, I am surprised at almost every

reading at its freshness and relevance to the problems of our times—for such is the Universality and Humanism.

—**Dr. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam**

TAMIL VEDA

Tirukkural occupies a place of pride in Tamil Literature. It is venerated by the Tamils in much the same way as the vedas and the Gita, the Sanskrit works. Hence the appellation **Tamil Veda** by which this supreme work is refered. Three of the four purusharthas that man kind should strive for viz. **Dharma, Artha** and **Kama** are dealt with at great length in this work under the names Arathupal, Porutpal and Kamathupal respectively. The fourth **Purushartha** viz. Moksha has not been treated separately. It may be because at the beginning of Arathupal, Moksha is dealt with in an allusive and indirect way. To him who follows

the principles of righteousness and there by earns his living and gets his legitimate desires fulfilled, Salvation is assured. Where then, is the need for a separate treatment of the Subject? This may another reason.

—**Thiru. S. N. Srirama Desikan**

UNIVERSAL SCRIPTURE

● The 'Sacred Tirukkural' of Tiruvalluvar is acclaimed as a Universal Scripture. The aphorisms of Tirukkural are applicable to the people of the world without any reservations. In this respect, it shines as an unique work of world literature.

—**Hon'ble K. Rajaram**

SYMBOL OF THE GLORIOUS HERITAGE

● **Tirukkural** is the crown and glory that has been bequeathed by Tamil literature. Indeed, it has enhanced the greatness of the Tamil language in the eyes of the

world. **Tirukkural** shines supreme in the **genre** of didactic literature of the world. It is a creative work that deals with the life of the man and prescribes norms for a virtuous and prosperous life. There is no other scripture that guide the life of human race.

—Hon'ble S. Aranganayakam

TIRUKKURAL: THE TOUCHSTONE OF TAMIL WISDOM

● **Tiruvalluvar**, the Divine poet of Tamil nadu has called for surrender at the feet of the Supreme Being, who is the embodiment of eight qualities, since he believes in the existence of God, while giving him various attributes.

There is no treatise superior to **Tirukkural**. Hence, it is necessary to be cautions about of all statements that are

contradictory to the Sacred Kural, which may be conveyed by any people whoever they may be.

—**Tamilkkadal Maraimalai Adigal**

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 'ONE WORLD'

● **Tiruvalluvar** was born in Tamilnadu. He is the author of **Tirukkural**. Let us ask ourselves whether we show regard to the country which had given birth to **Tiruvalluvar** or the immortal work that he has given to us? My praise would be for the work. Why? Tirukkural transcends the barriers of space and time. In its very outlook, it is universal and teaches the 'Brotherhood of Man'. Is it not the world is greater than a country?

Tamilnadu has earned a name and fame for giving birth to an illustrious, Sage, who appears as the 'Bard of Universal Man'.

Lofty ideals are embedded in **Tirukkural.** Among them, the one that radiates the whole work with great lustre is the ideal of ONE WORLD or the 'World is one Family'.

—Tamiltenral
Tiru. Vi. Kaliyanasundaranar

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL WORK

● **Tirukkural** is an unique work of literature that will be useful in several ways to the several people of the world. Literary critics master it as a piece of literature and find pleasure in experiencing its artistic grandeur. It can be revered by the righteous people as a holy scripture of any religion and may try to observe the maxims of moral life in their day-today life.

The men of public life can find nuances of state-craft, polity and diplomacy in **Tirukkural** and extol it as a great that has

enshrined the principles of political science. In this way, every one can make successful attempts to trace their own sentiments and convictions in **Tirukkural**. Almost all the didactic works which have attempted to analyse the vicissitudes, trials and tribulations of society, will definitely useful to a particular community or society. But the greatness of **Tirukkural** lies in its universal out look that ignores the space and time.

—Dr. M. Varadarajan

HAND BOOK FOR THE HUMAN SOCIETY

- The scholars of the world have praised **Tirukkural** as the embodiment of the principles to be adhered to by the human society for a calm and happy life. Why **Tiruvalluvar** has forgotten to pay homage to the goddess **Kalaimagal** (Minerva-the Muse of Arts and Learning), while he has

paid tributes to **Nilamagal** - the goddess of Earth, and **Tirumagal** - the goddess of Wealth (Lakshmi).

—Dr. M. P. Sivagnanam

CREAM OF RELIGIOUS IDEALS

● **Tirukkural**, which has been composed by **Valluvar**, deserves to be called a Holy Scripture. It appears to be a religious scripture. It expresses in unmistakable terms the cream of religious ideals in a nut-shell.

Tirukkural believes in the existence of the Supreme Being, i.e; the God. It describes Him as the embodiment of perfection in the traits and qualities of divinity.

But in order to induce the people to free themselves from the cycle of births and deaths, he advises them to seek refuge at the feet of the Lord.

—Tavatthiru Kunrakkudi Adigalar

GOSPEL COMPOSED BY A MAN

● **Tirukkural** is the priceless treasure of Tamilnadu. It reveals the flowering of the native genius of the Tamil people. Yet, it has been acclaimed as one of the precious riches of the world.

Bhagavad Gita was preached by the Lord Krishna and listened by a man. **Tiruvachagam** was sung by a man. In this case, the listener was the God.

But **Tirukkural** was preached by a man to the mankind. Even that was taught by a great-man, who led a righteous life successfully in this world. So, the ways *and means shown by* **Tiruvalluvar** *indeed* serves as a guide to virtuous life. There will be no doubt, when we call it as a Beacon light to the life of man.

—Muttamil Kavalar
Dr. K. A. P. Viswanatham

PRACTICAL WISDOM

Tirukkural is the great Tamil masterpiece of gnomic wisdom. It is impossible to exaggerate the finished literary perfection of the precepts contained in a work which may be regarded as the climax of Tamil literary art. Apart from its literary merits which are unsurpassed, its underlying philosophy combines the attributes of lofty thought and practical wisdom.

The chapters on household life, on self-control, the impermanence of things, on learning, on Ministers as the limbs of state, and on the ideals of patriotism as well as on human life and its manifestations are replete with distilled wisdom.

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

TAMIL MARAI

● We very often use the term **Tamil marai** (Holy Scripture of the Tamils), to

refer **Tirukkural**. But this usage seems to be a good old one. In the middle of the first millennium A.D., the poets of Tamil-agam called it **Tamil Veda**. But, the Veda in Sanskrit was not allowed to be studied and recited by the non-Aryan or Dravidian people. It was mainly intended for the higher castes in the Varnasrama social order.

But **Tirukkural** in Tamil is quite different from those reknowned Vedas.

Tirukkural preaches the lofty ideals required for the virtuous life of man in general. It is not a closed book to any caste or community.

Since, it has been written in Tamil-nadu, people of various sects and castes have been allowed to study, it has been acclaimed as **Tamil marai**.

It is also called **Pothu Marai**, i.e. Common Scripture, because it transcends all barriers of caste and community, as well as space and time.

No other work in world literature deserves to be called as **Pothu Marai** except **Tirukkural** written in the Tamil language.

—**Prof. K. P. Rathinam.**

SUBLIME THOUGHTS

Tamil language can take pride n possessing a priceless jewel in the **Tirukkural** of **Tiruvalluvar**, a work of all timin and climes. It is common knowledge that **Tiruvalluvar** deals with such topics as the sublimation of the individual, his education, domestic life, state-craft etc. In short it breathes the soul and genius of ancient Tamil culture noted for its cathoilicity and breadth of outlook. That it is a

work of Universal appeal is evident from the fact that it is translated in several anguages of the world."

Dr. N. D. Sundaravadivelu

REASONS FOR THE GREATNESS OF TIRUKKURAL

The greatness of **Tirukkural** *lies in the* three factors. One is the absence of parochialism and racial chauvinism in the work. Another factor is the humane outlook of the author. The third one is the Universal appeal of the work.

There is no reference direct, or indirect to the *Tamil language,*the *Tamils and Tamil*nadu. In this same way, there is no specific reference to the three royal dynasties of Tamilnadu or to the then ruling monarchs the Chera, Chola and Pandyan kingdoms of Tamilnadu.

Valluvar inculcates not only a philosophy of Ahimsa, non-killing and non-eating

the flesh of the birds and animals, but he also envisages a philosophy of recognising the feelings and yearnings of man. He advises to follow the virtue of non-injuring others and instructs to *alleviate the sorrows* and sufferings of human beings.

In *Visualising* new social order, **Tiruvalluvar** informs the humanity, the ways and means to cross the barriers of community, race language and religion. He lays stress on the oneness of humanity. With this basic idea *in his mind, he has given a* fascinating picture of a Perfect Man' or the 'Citizen of the World'.

—**Prof. K. Anbazhakan**

BOWL OF WISDOM

***Tirukkural** alone is enough to edify the world. It contains all the aspects of wisdom and there is *nothing which it does* not contain.

—***Tiru Naganar***

THE MAIN SOURCE OF TAMIL CULTURE

***Tirukkural** is one of the prime classics that have shaped the culture of the Tamils. It is known as **Muppal**, i.e., a work in three parts. It has captivated the minds and thought of the greatmen of the globe.

From the hoary past, the ideas and ideals, and the words and wisdom of Tirukkural have been extolled and practised by the people of Tamilnadu with great respect and reverence.

—**Dr. R. P. Sethu Pillai**

POPULAR WORK

The most popular of these poems and on which has exercised the greatest influence on succeeding generations is the Muppal or Kural composed by **Valluvar**..... The Muppal consists, as implied by its name, of three parts which treated of virtue,

wealth and love. It was a code of morals expressed in poetical aphorisms...... The author appears to have been a free thinker and held that true wisdom is the science of happiness ..... His fame as the author of the Kúral or Muppal will last as long as Tamil is a living language.

—**Thiru. V. Kanakasabhai Pillai**

GREATNESS OF TIRUKKURAL

The **Tirukkural** is the Sacred Book of the Tamil nation, cherished by one and all of them whatever may be their individual faith. It is a text-book of morals, politics and love, and reflects ancient Tamil culture as no other work does. The author Tiruvalluvar was a Tamil saint who graced the earth about two thousand years ago, whose caste and religion have always remained a mystery. His work has been translated

into more than a dozen foreign languages and certainly deserves to become as popular among the Tamils young and old as the Bhagavad Gita among the sanskrit-loving peoples of India.

—**Prof. S. Anavarata Vinayakam Pillai**

HOLY SCRIPTURE

***Tirukkural** transcends the barriers of time and space. The significance of it, lies in this universal perspective.

Kural, not only prescribes the principles of moral life, which will ensure happiness in this world, but it also directs to secure the life in Heaven and also the Eternal the Bliss. Becau se of the divine traits, it has been hailed as the Holy Scripture.

—**Molinayiru G. Devaneyap Pavanar**

BIBLE OF THE TAMILS

Tiruvalluvar is the greatest name in Tamil literature. His poem **Tirukkural** is a master piece of thoughtful poetical composition on all aspects of *life*. It reveals a man of profound learning, wide experience and broad sympathies.

The **Kural** stanza conveys great truths in epigrams, very often charged with poetic fire and illuminated with apt similies. Though a short treatise with only 2600 lines, its value is far-reaching because it has entered into the very mind of the Tamil people. It was to them what the English was to the English puritans and Pilgrim Progress. It is the bed - rock of Tamil culture and character"

—**Thiru. A. C. Paul Nadar.**

PROFOUND WISDOM

Saint **Tiruvalluvar's** Tamil classic is full of profound wisdom expressed in simple and lucid verse.

—Hon'ble Jayachamaraja Wadiyar

UNIQUE WORK OF THE GENIUS OF THE TAMILS

Tirukkural is an unique creation of the Tamil Genius. Its message is universally recognised today as of great importance. A clear appreciation of the ideas underlying to the message of Thirukkural mest necessarily lead us to understand the cultural background in which it arose.

—RaoBhadur A. Chakravarti

INTELLECTUAL WEALTH OF THE TAMILS

***Tirukkural** is a supreme and priceless wealth that has been left to the posterity

by the ancient Tamil people. The scholars of the Orient and Occident have reverence for this masterpiece of Tamil literature. It is known for its universal outlook as it has appeal beyond the barriers of races, religious Creeds and languages. So, there is no surprise when the humanity extolls it as universal Book of Ethics.

—Tirukkuralar V. Munisam

A PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISE

*This ancient Tamil classic does not insist upon the Don'ts, (i.e. to be avoided). But with great care and consideration, it expresses the basic norms of moral philosophy.Hence, this work can be treated as a philosophical treatise. **Tirukkural** informs every human being, to select the ideals and maxims of moral life that are suitable to them and instructs them to lead a virtuous

life in accordance with their selection of maxims by giving priority to them.

— Mahavidwan S. Dandapani Desigar

TRIVARGA

The **Kural** the greatest didactical poems of India, was but a treatment of **Muppal** or the Trivarga of Dharma, Artha and Kama, the sage wisely leaving the consideration of the fourth Vitu of the Caturvarga; viz, Moksha, to individuals according to the way in which they reacted towards the unseen reality.

—Dr. Sunita Kumar Chatterji

TAMIL VEDA

Indeed, his work (**Tirukkural**) is eulogised by the Tamil people as the **Tamil Veda**, the Universal **Veda** and the later **Veda**, Divine Book etc; It is a great pity that such a treasure should have confined

for so many ages only to one single people even in Hindusthan.

—**V. V. S. Aiyar**

MAXIMS OF MODERNITY

*The principles of moral life and the political economy enunciated in the **Tirukkural** will be suitable for all time to come. At the same time, it appears more modern in its lofty ideals.

Kural excels in its treatment and approach to solve the various problems of human life and state-craft.

—**Dr. S. Ilakkuvanar**

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TREATMENT OF HUMANISM

The poet (**Tiruvalluvar**) was a keen observer of nature, animate and inanimate, a diligent student of ancient classics on ahapporul and purapporul, on rhetoric and

dialetic on morality and state craft, on *agriculture and medicine, on folklore, tree* and plant, love and on sex psychology and erotic diplomacy and was a practical thinker and reformer is beyond all Cavil or question.

—Prof. M. S. Purnalingam Pillai

TREASURE-HOUSE OF WISDOM

The **Tirukkural** is the greatest treasure-house of wisdom in Tamil, and as *the great poet* **Subramanya Bharathi** has said, it is the gift of Tamilnadu to the world.

The **Tirukkural** is famous for its ethical and political principles of a very high standard and for its noble ideals in treatment of love.

—Dr. M. Varadarajan

A GUIDE FOR THE PILGRIMAGE OF MAN

*__Muppal__ shines as a torch and shows the path of pilgrimage of man in this world. It is a rare and unique treasure to the Tamil people and Tamilnadu, which is not easily accessible to other nations of the world. It has arrested the attention of the greatmen of the world.

No doubt, a day will come, when the humanity will seek the help of the wisdom that has been embedded in **Tirukkural** to save the mankind from the disasters and destructions of war.

—**Dr. E. Sundaramurthi**

THE MESSAGE OF TIRUKKURAL

Tirukkural is better known to the world abroad than the language and the

land of its birth, albeit in a manner confined to a limited circle of intellectuals all over the world. Despite the inadequacies and imperfections of many of its foreign translations, the all-conquering universality of its appeal is touch that it has permeated every land and every age, every tongue and every creed, and has won unstinting tributes from even those whose knowledge of the Tamil language, literature or culture is otherwise negligible.

If these claims are correct, it follows that the **Kural** is not mere ethics not mere philosophy, but a full-blooded religious philosophy that has a unique message to mankind covering all the requirements of man. —**Dr. K. Appadurai**

WORK OF UNIVERSAL APPEAL

Tiruvalluvar has given expression to thoughts and feelings which are applicable

to all countries at all times. Hence, it has and will always have universal appeal.

Tirukkural is free from narrow sectarianism. It can be accepted by all religions. It contains moral ideas which are means for all people irrespective of caste, creed or profession.

When comparing **Tirukkural** with **Bhagavad-Gita**, Albert Schweitzer says "according to the **Kural**, duty is not confined, as in the **Bhagavad-Gita**, to what the caste calling involves, but consists in general all that is good."

—Dr. R. Sarangapani

GOSPEL OF THE TAMILS

Tiruvalluvar, two thousand years before him, writing his **Tirukkural**, mentioned God in ten couplets, and in the remaining 1,320 he taught man how to

lead his every day life. The product of the **Tirukkural** is the 'Cannons', - the complete man. Thus, **Valluvam,** that is, leading one's life according to the teachings of **Tiruvalluvar,** is true religion. The **Tirukkural** is the gospel this religion, a gospel with a unique difference, for a person belonging to any religion can, without conflict with its creeds and its tenets, accept its teachings.

—Thiru. G. Vanmikanathan

UNIVERSAL BOOK OF WISDOM

He (**Tiruvalluvar**) is one of those seers whose message is intended not merely for their own age or country but for all times and for all mankind. **Tiruvalluvar has given** to the world a work to which, in perfection of form, profoundity of thought, nobleness of sentiment and earnestness of moral purpose, very few

books outside the grand scriptures of humanity can at all be compared.

—Thiru. V. V. S. Aiyar

WONDERFUL WISDOM

The **Kural** as its name *indicates* is composed in the shortest metre known in Tamil prosody and is a supreme example of brevity and terseness of expression, coupled with depth and wisdom of sentiment. . . . Apart from its intrinsic merit as a literary production, it is calculated to give our countrymen in the North, as an insight into the unity of thought and culture of Bharat, as reflected by a venerated ancient Tamil classic."

—Justice M. Patanjali Sastri

The **Tirukkural** verses contain wonderful wisdom compressed and condensed in

very brief verses. It is said by a critical admirer that **Tiruvalluvar's** attempt was like packing the seven oceans within a mustard seed."

—**Justice. K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri**

FREE FROM THE SANSKRIT INFLUENCE

Almost free from the influence of Sanskrit, the **Kural** shows the richness and power of the Tamil language.

—**Thiru. J. M. Nallasami Pillai**

SUPREMACY OF TIRUKKURAL

Tiruvalluvar's work in its essence generally, and more particularly in the First Book on Arathupal, is a comprehensive treatise on the art of well-harmonised living. Naturally, the fundamental basis of the treatment is a balance between the Hindu religious tenets as digested and laid down in the Bhagawad Gita and the Tamil

way of life with a preponderance of vigorous rationality. The influence of other religious and ethical thinking from outside Tamilnadu and India could also be traced in the work, which, however, is a happily integrated whole and not a patch-work. It is a unique synthesis between the ideas of affirmation and negativism in life. It was too, a timely call to the Tamil people to return to their realistic values of the Sangam age that was ending, while absorbing the good aspects of the other ways of life that had come into Tamilnadu from outside, by about the time of **Valluvar.**

—**Thiru. S. M. Diaz**

ETHICAL WORK

Tirukkural is classical among the didactive works of the Sangam Age. It is variously dated from 3rd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. It is **considered a work**

of ethics of **par excellence.** If ethics is the Science of Living, then **Tirukkural** is the undying classic on the subject.

—Dr. B. Natarajan

GREAT WORK

It is one of the works which we ought to read, re-read and make it a part and parcel of ourselves. Our country will greatly benefit by a true and proper study of this great work.

—Rao Bahadur,
T. M. Narayanaswamy Pillai

THEOSOPHICAL WORK

The modern reader will find in this classical poem (**Tirukkural**) much food for thought, reflection and action. The theosophist will discover poet's theosophy in study. In it, God is personal and impersonal and Truth. The moralist will be

satisfied with his precepts and maxims on hate and the evil - doer.

—Prof. M. S. Purnalingam Pillai

CHOICEST EXPRESSION

Tiruvalluvar is at his best in his poetic thought, form and diction, so much so, this **Kamattupal** is classes as one of the lyrical masterpieces of world literature on human love. His verse are considered choicest expression of human thought and the noblest of passions of mankind.

—Rao Sahib K. Kothandapani Pillai

MAXIMS OF RIPE WISDOM

What mattered (**Tiruvalluvar**) was not metaphysics, dogma, credal adhesions or regular ritualistic practices but rather the reality of everyday life with its constant need for nuances of understanding and behaviour. **Tirukkural** thus, become the

crystalization of ripe wisdom and sage counsel and utilising good sense.

—**Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar**

BOOK OF VALUES

The **Tirukkural** of **Tiruvalluvar** is the pride of South India. What the *Bhagavad Gita* is to the Sanskritist, the **Tirukkural** is to the lovers of Tamil. In this book, **Tiruvalluvar** treats of **Muppal**, or **Trivarga** (Dharma, Artha and Kama). He has divided his book into three parts, the first dealing with Aram, the second with Porul, and the last with Kama. This Tamil classic deals in extenso with the moral values of life which foster neighbourliness and love among all men and women to whateve race or community they may belong.

—**Prof. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar**

LOVELY MONUMENT

The Pyramid of Cheops in far-away Egypt is over five thousand years old. As it rose proudly in a land fertile of vegetation, among a people whose civilisation was the glory of the world, it was as wonderful then as now, though its meaning was perhaps more understood in that age than in our own. And it is wonderful today, since Time, with all the changes of civilisation and the influx of new peoples and new languages, has yet left its glory undiminished.

The Kutb-Minar on the plains of Delhi stands as tall and stately today as it did seven hundred and fifty years ago when it was first built. Time has not rusted it.

But they are of dull stone and dead metal, and were the work of the toiling poor, whipped to their labour by the

stinging lash and the angry choleric word. Pride of power and an abounding vanity were their motives.

And they are evanescent; for time is inexorable and its ravages are sure. Of the Great Pyramid there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down and it shall surely crumble and fall to pieces; 'beauty passes, beauty vanishes.' The Kutb Minar too will go the way of all dust.

The **Kural** of **Tiruvalluvar** is a far greater and lovelier thing than these; fashioned as it was, in the flowering time of an ancient civilisation, as the result of many cultures. Its material is living speech strong, simple and marvellously accurate; the work of one man, a work of love, the bodying forth of an inner purity and refinement. Therefore it stands today a new and

gracious miracle, as even though the acts of literary vandals who have left their mark even on the best literature are sometimes plainly noticeable and in places just not so obvious, but never in such measure as to detract from its charm or impair its truth and beauty. At once sober and magnificent, stern and kind, and didactic, stimulating, humorous, lofty by turns, there still remains in every part the divine spark of thought and of form the creative touch of reason as well as of poetry.

And it is permanent and enduring. It will live as long as Tamil, or any human language may live; now that all men know of its worthiness we may reckon that its wisdom will be preserved in a hundred languages, and cherished like 'a jewel that cannot be taken away.'

Is it any wonder then that its author is regarded as a saint even in the land of his birth?

—**Thiru. P. N. Appuswamy**

MOUNT EVEREST OF THE TAMIL THOUGHT

If the Tamil Classics are the Himalayas of human thought, the **Tirukkural** is the Mt. Everest soaring above the Himalayas themselves. The **Tirukkural** is the highest expression of the Triad or the Tetrad, which to be appreciated for *what it is in* the original, should be seen with a truly Tamil eye and not with the borrowed vision of the mediaeval Sanskritist eyes.

It (Tirukkural) is a homogeneous. Work, a Bible of Humanity and Human life indivisible.

—**Dr. K. Appadurai**

TEMPORAL AND MUNDANE THOUGHTS

Kural is basically temporal and mundane in content should not be confused with agnosticism or deism. The fact that valluvar opens his account with an invocation to God Almighty; that he allots a separate chapter to Ascetic virtues and his deterministic view of Destiny should suffice to convince us that he was an ardent theist. But what distinguishes him from all other sages of his time and after his practical outlook of life on earth. Have faith in God, but wait for the green light before crosssing the street, —is the kind of advice typical of him.

—Dr. B. Natarajan

GLORY OF THE TAMILS

Tiruvalluvar is the doyen among the Cankam poets. He is the chief glory of

ancient Tamilakam. He is a revolutionary thinker. Rationalism and objectivity mark his process of thinking. He has minutely observed this world from all angles. He has put before the world a policy and a plan surcharged with pragmatism. He has given out a moral code for the whole of humanity, irrespective of colour, creed, and community, and has set forth the way for good life from the world's point of view, unbiassed by any narrow sectarian prejudices.

—Dr. N. Baluswamy

THE MONUMENT OF THE GENIUS OF THE TAMILS

The "Kural" is the crowning glory of Tamil Culture. It is the most valuable and Cherished possession of our race.

If the Englishman would sooner give up his empire. I have a shrewd suspicion,

however, that John Bull would not do any such thing in a hurry to loose Shakespeare, we Tamilians may similarly boast that we would rather loose all the other mighty monuments of our civilisation like our temples and palaces and even the sources of our existence, the cauvery and the Tamprabharni, than the Thirukkural. To my mind this single incomparable, wonderful book is worth more than the whole of Lord Macaulay's library and, for the matter of that, than any collection of western or Eastern Literature (except the Bible and one or two other sacred Books) ancient, modern or ultra modern.

—**Mr. S. M. Michael**

WELL-KNOWN WORK

Tirukkral is often considered a moteley collection of pithy, yet lofty ethical maxims of an ancient idealistic moral

philosopher. Such literature is not rare in the history of ancient times, e.g., the Proverbs of the Bible, where in sometimes, the first line inthe couplet expresses a general proposition and the second its particular application. These may either .exhort the reader to positive good actions or warn him against evil ones, e.g; In the Ten Commandments, only two fourth and fifth-keeping the Sabbath and honouring the parents are positive. In **Tirukkural**, positive injunctions of the ch. 8 on love, ch. 9 on hospitality and 11 on gratitude and the prohibition against lasciviousness of ch. 92, drunkenness ch. 93 and gambling ch. 94 are very well-known.

—Thiru. V. D. Sahayam

ARTISTIC GRANDEUR

Tirukkural differs from other **Sangam** classics in its composition and in the use of

metre. It is not a cooperative endeavour of different poets, who lived in different periods. **Kural** is a product of a particular individual who established his name and fame as a poet, philosopher and a sage of the **Sangam** Age.

Tirukkural is remarkable for its range of ideas and variety. It has been best known to the world for its outspoken universalism and attractive modernism. It expresses the lofty, world transcending ideals of supreme tradition in Tamil. This didactic literature reveals the originality in ideas, in the art of presentation and the nuances of poetic excellence. The poet breaks the rigidity of conventions by the skillful manipulation of simple innovations and imagery.

—Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu

BEACON LIGHT

The **Kural** of **Valluvar** stands an undying beaconlight over the arc of time.

As a book of practical guidance to the art of living Kural has few parallels in the literatures of the world.

Kural shows the way to life's poise, depicting its simple graces and innocent pleasures with delicate touches of pleasing poetry and persuasive reasoning.

Its philosophy is perenial
Its coverage in universal
Its wisdom is profound
Its humanism is pervasive
Its brevity is masterly
Its orderliness is amazing
Its poetry is exalting.

It is a book that is opened with expectation and closed with delight and profit;

and once started the repetition of the exercise is irresistiable day after day.

No wonder, 'scholars of diverse sects and religions, races and languages, have read it with diligence through twenty centuries and have alike acclaimed its universal and timeless approach to life's problems.

Rao Sahib. S. R. V. Arasu

A CLASSIC WITH A PERFECT STRUCTURE

The content of the **Tirukkural** is undoubtedly patterned. In fact it is structured very carefully, so that no 'structural gaps' occur in the text. Every single couplet is indispensable for the structures whole. Every distich has, so to say, two kinds of meaning if isolated and thus removed from the content - structure the couplets lose a very important meaning

componet - their 'structured meaning.' An isolated couplet may be charming and interesting in itself, but it is just a 'wise saying', a moral maxim, a 'literary proverb' in perfect form, possessing, in varying degree, the prosodic and rhetoric qualities of gnomic poetry. It acquires a 'structural meaning' only in relation to other couplets, forming higher patterns, and finally, in relation to the entire text, which forms a perfect total structure. This falt is in sharp contrast with the early classical poetry, where each stanzas was a perfectly self contains unit various stanzas were gathered in anthologies; while, as already stressed, the Tirukkural is not an anthology.

Man in the totality of his relationships is the subject of the Kural. After a cosmic introduction, which praises god, rain, supermen and virtue, the author of the book

turns towards man, whose ersonality is gradually unfolded in 'ever expanding concentric cycles' within the family with his wife and children, within the community with his friends, and within his country, in his relationship towards the ruler and the state. Man is shown not in a static state but in development, and the force that is behind this dynamism is sympathy, even love manifesting itself through kind thought, sweet words and right actions.

—Dr. S. Gopalan

WORK ON ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY

The work itself is believed, on fairly reasonable evidence, to have been written in the I st century B. C. and accepted by the Tamil Academy of Madurai in the year 31 B. C. In any case, as explained in my comments on Kural 55, this Kural which is

quoted in Silappadhikaram and Manimekalai, was written well before the 2nd century A. D. (2) Tirukkural is considered by most scholars to be a felicitously couched book on ethical philosophy, applicable to the universal man in a most practical way though the basic premises of the poet are of Indian.

—**Thiru S. M. Diaz**

RUDIMENTS OF RATIONALISM

Saint **Tiruvalluvar** was no orthodox religionist but believer in the maker of the world, for whom he had no particular name, though he described him as vahuttan he was free from sectarianism and as his poem makes an universal appeal to humanity and application to life in general. So the interpretation of his poem must be

more rationalistic and broad minded than Sectarian.

—**Prof. M. S. Purnalingam pillai**

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

The perfection of **Tamilian** thought and its greatest contribution to world thought on all problems of life is agreed among all thinkers to be **Tirukkural**. It is universally acclaimed as the greatest Tamil Classic. It has 'two aspects to its greatness—the most profound thought on the most baffling problems of existence and the most astounding economy of words and finish of style.

—**Thiru. M. Arunachalam**

CLASSIC OF NON-VIOLENCE

The book **Tirukkural**, which was composed about the first century B. C., is an

exposition of the fundamental principles of Jainism.

The Tamil culture portrayed in **Tiruk kural** jealously guarded these two principles—the non-violent **dharma** as the basis of life, and the casteless society, as the foundation of the socio - economic structure.

—Rao sahib. A. Chakravarti

THE UNIVERSALISM OF TIRUKKURAL

The illustrious **Tirukkural** of **Tiruvalluvar** is easily the best read Tamilwork among the Tamils themselves. It also happens to be the best-known and the most oft-translated Tamil work in the various other languages of India and the world. So far as we know, it has kept up this place of honour all along the history of the Tamils. For there is not a single literary work in

Tamil from the days of the **Tolkappiam** and the **Sangam** classics to the national poems of **Bharati** and **Bharatidasn** of our own day that has not paid its tribute to **Tiruvalluvar** either by direct praise or by quoting from him or by using his own characteristic words phrases or ideas amidst their own as a mark of their appreciation of his inimitable splendour.

—Dr. K. Appadurai

*VEDA OF MANKIND

Tirukkural, the Tamil Classic is universal in its outlook, which has no barriers of caste, creed, language and country. Hence, it has been acclaimed as the **Veda** of mankind.

—Thiru N. M. R. Subbaraman

POLITY IN TIRUKKURAL

Tiruvalluvar's work is well within the broad Hindu tradition but at the same time

differs considerably from more orthodox texts. Let us look briefly into this dual aspect of his work.

Even if we ascribe him to the second century before christ, he could not have escaped Aryan or North Indian influences which had already commingled inextricably with Tamil culture—as attested by purananuru. There is good reason too to assume that he was a Jain. So he was doubly exposed—to the general Northern influences in the community and to the more intensive influence of Jain monks from the North. He refers often to a consensus of earlier works to reinforce some of his points—and some of these works at least were in Sanskrit or Pali.

—Prof. V. Subramanian

GOD...

Kural is the one book in Tamil about which thousands of pages have been written, both in Tamil and English. But unfortunately, everything about **Kural** is uncertain—the author, his place, his class in society, his religion, his age, his profession in life; and *Vaiyapuri Pillai* had taken elaborate points to prove that the thoughts of **Kural** were adaptations of Sanskrit. In this respect we may hazard a remark in a light vein that **Kural** is like God—everything about both is so uncertain.

—Thiru M. Arunachalam

BOOK ON THE ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY

Tirukkural is essentially a book on ethical philosophy. It portrays a way of life and it lays down a code of conduct. The author's beliefs are *simply stated; he*

believes in God. The first ten verses are in praise of God. But he does not call God by name so that he can be identified with one religion or another. He refers to him as The wise One, The Incomparable One, and as The Sage of the Sea of virtue. He is completely non-denominational. He also seems to believe in rebirth. Often, he refers to 'seven births' or 'countless births'.

—**Thiru Kasthuri Srinivasan**

GOSPAL OF ACTION

Those basic aspects could be summed up in the briefest expression as the performance of one's Duty with Dignity and Discipline. This gospel of action, which ensures not only the progress and welfare of Individual life, more so of the people became the turning theme of the masses, particularly in Tamilnadu in the 20th century.

—**Dr. M. Muthuraman**

METRE FOR BREVITY

Perhaps the author might have chosen this metre for brevity. But within this narrow limit he has commendably used all sorts of poetic devices. Tirukkural was and still is the only well-known master piece in this type of metre in the field of Tamil Literature.

—Dr. A. Dhamotharan

ILLUMINATED THOUGHT

It was Bernard Shaw who said that his role as a social philosopher was to chasten morals with ridicule. **Tiruvalluvar** also uses ridicule as a means of chastening morals. Talking of a man who covets another's wife, he says:

'Of fools who part from virtue's state,
The greatest lurks by his neighbour's gate'. (142)

Many of his sublime thoughts are illuminated with unusual flashes of wit and humour. Talking of those who only pretend friendship with ulterior motives, he says:

'Friendship of those who only play a part
will change as often as a woman's heart'. (822)

—Thiru. Kasthuri Srinivasan

ETHICAL WORK

The great ethical work of the Tamils is **Tirukkural**. The title means 'Sacred, short stanza work'. The original name given by the author himself is **Muppal**, meaning three divisions, i.e., **Aram**, **Porul** and **Inbam**.

The **Tirukkural** contains 133 chapters. Each of the chapter consists of ten couplets in poetic form.

This ethical work is not merely a treatise on morals but also it deals with the socio-political philosophy of the ancient Tamils. There are a number of significant features in the second part of **Tirukkural**, known as **Porutpal**, which excels in its approach, and elucidation of the principles of the state-craft. Though it extolls monarchy (Benevolent despotism), it lays stress on the democratic spirit of the ruler and the ruled.

—**Dr. T. Murugarathanam**

A WORK OF DIVINE WISDOM

***Tirukkural** is one of the precious assets that we have received from our forefathers. It is one of the pre eminent work of Divine wisdom. It reveals the width of the human heart, the depth of the human thought and the subtleness of human consciousness in a crystal clear way.

Tiruvalluvar, the great sage and seer of Tamilnadu, has painted a picture of an ideal life with great clarity and wider perspective.

—**Dr. S. Ramakrishnan**

FINEST SPECIMEN OF DIDACTIC LITERATURE

***Tirukkural** is considered as one of the finest specimen of didactic literature in Tamil. It has become a guide to the every-day life of the people. The maxims of **Valluvar**, though composed twenty decades ago appear more modern in several aspects of human life.

This spirit of modernism had attracted the attention of the scholars and savants of the globe.

—**Vageesa Kalanidhi,**
K. V. Jaganathan

SIGNIFICANCE OF TIRUKKURAL

*People who have studied the **Tirukkural** of **Tiruvalluvar** and have understood it without the slightest doubt about its comprehensiveness never think about **Manu Dharma Sastra**, which preaches justice in a discriminating way between its discriminating communities.

—Prof. P. Sundaram Pillai

CARDINAL VIRTUES

*The teachings of **Tiruvalluvar**, even today appear most modern in spirit. Non-killing and abstinence from eating the flesh of birds and animals are the two important concepts, which **Tiruvalluvar** have emphasised as among the most important virtues that have to be practised by the people. I believe those who practise these two virtues will be the fitting persons to speak and write **Tiruvalluvar**.

—Dr. M. Durai Rangasami

LAW OF LIFE

The leading work is the Thirukkural (Kural) by Thiruvalluvar. This contains 1330 couplets, each a venba of two lines, the second being shorter than the first, grouped into 133 Decads (Sections), the whole being divided into 3 parts. (1) The law of life (Aram-Dharma of the householder and the ascetic). (2) Social and Political economy (Porul-Artha) and (3) Love (Inbam-Kama). The work is rightly acclaimed as a world-classic. (It has been translated into many languages, and new translations are still being made). It incorporates principles of universal appeal independent of all warning creeds, and embodies great wisdom. Subtle humour, apt imagery, racy to the soil, forcefulness, restraint and dignity, add to its poetic charm. The old conventions about the treatment of the love

themes are handled in a refined way, purged of all grossness. There are many commentaries; the most famous being that of Parimel-Azhagar. Commentaries from modern angles continue to be written.

About the life of the great poet who was perhaps even greater as a man, little is known definitely, apart from legends. The general belief is that he hailed from Mylapore-Madras and was immediately before the christian era, i.e. about 2000 years ago.

—**Thiru. R. Rangachari**

LIMBS OF THE STATE

The broad plan of **Porutpaal** is set out in its first couplet restating the Seven-limb theory-by calling six of them, army, people, resources, counsel, allies and forts, attributes of the first limb, the king. The rest of the book deals with these seven beginning, with the king and ending with the

people. A lot of material on each of these topics is drawn from the Arthasastra and perhaps some Smritis - though every chapter and verse cannot find their exact counterparts in them.

—**Prof. V. Subramanian**

WORLD CLASSIC

Greatmen are those who originate great thoughts that shape history. Tiruvalluvar is a greatman, not mentioned in history.

In the early stages Tirukkural was an outstanding work of didactic literature, only of Tamilnadu, but later, it became a world classic.

Tirukkural is the greatest piece of didactic literature, ever produced in Tamil, and perhaps one of the greatest in any language. **Valluvar** was a man with a sense of history, and the urge of a present mis-

sion, along with a vision of future. Only such aman could have composed these beautiful little couplets, which encompass the wisdom of the world, and of the ages gone by, as well as to come, in thoughts so profound and succient, words so pregnant with meaning and poetic beauty, so effective, all in two lines! **Tirukkural** is therefore, truly a world classic.

—Thiru. S. M. Diaz

COMPANION TO LIFE

There is no genius so dear to the heart of humanity as **Tiruvalluvar**, who at the touch of his pen had suddenly turned a dull and melancholy world into a bowl of ambrosia.

The religion of **Tiruvalluvar** can be said to be the practice of virtue born out of love. Zoroaster, Confucius, Lord Buddha,

Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed are the venerable founders of various religious creeds of the world. These holymen were born to teach the people of the Universe, the righteous way of living.

Though the fundamental teachings of these religious teachers are Universal. Yet, they create a difference of religious ferver among men. But **Tirukkural** written over two-thousand years ago, is a scripture, the contents of which are universal, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or religion. Hence, this work is a companion and guide to humanity.

—**Pandit V. Natesan**

OCEAN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

● **Valluvam** appears as the ocean of righteousness in Tamil. I have dived deep into that sea, to pick up some of the

precious pearls that radiates with splendour.

—Dr. K. Mohanarasu

BOOK OF LOFTY IDEALS

I venture to think that **Tirukkural** in Tamil has not its equal in any language or literature. That marvellous work almost makes me feel proud as a Tamilian. The sturdy common sense of it, interlaced in every line with pure poetry, high philosophy and every-day ethics, has made it the finest and most exquisite of literary art. For refined and delicate sentiment and subtle suggestion, the work is a veritable show-room. For expression, at once full and forcible, accurate and artistic, it is unrivalled. For the study of that mysterious relationship between thought and word, every verse in it shines like a specimen of the jeweller's art.

—Mrs. T. Tirunavukkarasu

THE ONLY BOOK

Tiru-k-kural, is the overwhelmingly positive reply one gets from a Tamil - speaking man or woman living in any part of the globe to the question what would you plump for, if you are left with no choice but to choose only one book, of a the books in the world ?

It is referred to as the Tamil Scripture which term is used not to denote the scripture of the Tamils exclusively, but to connote the scripture written in the Tamil language.

—**Thiru. K. C. Kamaliah**

THE VEDA OF THE TAMILS

Tirukkural is a poetic composition of great antiquity, in the Tamil literature, a classic and treatise **Parexcellence** and consequently, it has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the

ages. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom. Containing the substance of the Five vedas, **Kural** remains the gospel of mankind. The compositions are sweet to the mind to meditate on, sweet to the ear to hear, sweet to the mouth to repeat. Described as the Veda of the Tamils, it is a book of universal importance and is also hailed as the bible of the Tamilnad. The author sings of virtue, morals, love, happiness, prosperity and wealth from a high ethical standpoint. The work consists of three Books dealing with virtue, wealth and happiness. The striking feature is its freshness which makes one feel as if it was meant for the present times. Composed by the king of poets, it has not lost its beauty by the lapse of time but has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the ages.

—Mr. K. Kamalanathan

QUINTESSENCE OF WISDOM

The **Tirukkural** is the more distinguished example of proverbial literature in the Tamil language. . . The **Tirukkural** is the quintessence of much wisdom which had crystalized in the social consciousness of the people to whom the author belonged. The **Kural** is in form and in substance proverbial and had better be treated on a par with the Chinese and Hebrew proverbial literature of ancient times.

—Dr. N. Subrahmanian

THE VISION OF VALLUVAR

● The vision of **Valluvar** was wider than the earth; higher than the sky and deeper than the ocean. In this respect he excels others, who have devoted their mind and thought in the reconstruction of the social order of the Universe. He visualised

a new world which will be conducive to the happy life of the man of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

He appears as a magnificent peak of human intelligence, which has not yet been scaled by any wizard of the world.

—Thiru. M. A. Manickavelu

A PAGAN'S WISDOM

This poem is now well-known to the world on account of the Latin and English translations of European Scholars. These scholars, having been mainly Christian Eccleciastics have been attracted by the excellent ethics taught in it in a special kind of short stanza, with very much meaning concentrated in very few words. Father Beschi, the greatest of European Tamil Scholars, is said to have remarked that the tongue of Tiruvalluvar who sang

the aphorisms of Kural could not have gone to Hell, even though being Pagan, he must have gone there.

The short verse (Kural) of this poem is a very successful imitation of the Sutra style of Sanskrit writers on Pseudo-Scientific subjects; the Kural Venba is superior to the Sutra, because it is in poetry whereas the latter is in prose. The verse is firmly knit and the author, here and there, uses poetic images to relieve the dreariness of direct didactics. Artists have always refused to admit didactic poetry into the legitimate realms of the Muse, but if excellence of workmanship and the occasional illumination of moral teaching by flashes of true poetic fire can justify the acceptance of any didactic poem as true poetry the Tirukkural is that poem.

—Prof P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar

A WORK BASED ON THE EARLIER VEDAS OF THE TAMILS

● The ideas and ideals that are expressed by **Valluvar** are acceptable by the warring creeds of the world.

Tirukkural has been composed by **Valluvar**, in order to fill the vacuum created by the disappearance of the earlier **Tamil Vedas**, which were lost in the limbo of oblivion.

He gave new orientation to the cherished ideals of **Aram, Porul, Inpam** and **Veedu** which are embedded in the earlier scriptures of the Tamil people.

—**Prof. K. Subramaniya Pillai**

WORK OF INDIAN WISDOM

● **Valluvar** had a great fascination for the eternal truths. His observations on non-violence **(Ahimsa)**, Compassion **(Arul-udaimai**, fellow-feeling) **(Oppuravu)** and

speaking **truth (Vaymai)** are the quint-essence of our ancient Indian Wisdom.

Valluvar's description of Home, the sweet Home and his stress on hospitality reveal the brilliant exposition of the funda-mentals of Tamil culture

—Namakkal Kavignar
V. Ramalingam Pillai

MYSTIC APPROACH

● **Valluvar,** the philosopher-poet of Tamilnadu, has thrown a flood - of light on the intricate problems of life. He was not only a moral philosopher, but also a great mystic-poet who had contemplated a new system of thinking in the philosophical speculations of the ancient Tamils.

Tirukkural deserves in all its aspects as a wonderful literature, that has enunciated to ethos of human life which

never fail to have a fresh impact on our democratic social order.

—**Prof. A.S. Gnanasambandan**

TAMIL MARAI

● **Valluvar's** vision of a new world is based on casteless and creedless social order has induced the saints and seers and poets and philosophers of Tamil Nadu who belong at to different religious creeds, throughout the ages to admire and adore the lofty wisdom of Tiruvalluvar without any restraint. So, they have extolled it as **Tamil Marai**.

—**Prof. K. Vellaivarananar**

A HOLY SCRIPTURE

● It has been a well known fact that **Tirukkural** has secured an unique place in the domain of World Literature. **Kural** has been acclaimed as great as the ethical and

religious scriptures of the world such as Bhagavad Gita, sacred Kuran and the Holy Bible. It has been said that the work of **Valluvar** excels in its lofty ideals and in the direct appeal to the human heart. The universal outlook of **Tirukkural** and its profound wisdom of pragmatic moral ideals have enhanced the greatness of this work and have placed it in the fore-front of the holy scriptures of the world.

—Dr. V. I. Subramoniyom

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The appeal of **Kural**, is time less, unaffected by several changes, undistubed by political upheavals, and unsullied by narrow prejudices. Its philosophy has become part of the philosophy of life of Tamilnad.

—Dr. S. P. Adinarayan

EARLIEST ETHICAL LITERATURE

● **Tirukkural**, one of the ancient Tamil classics, is the earliest ethical literature of the mankind. It lays stress on the earthly-life, based on righteousness, which would ultimately lead to the self-realisation.

—**Thiru. G. Varadarajan**

RUDIMENTS OF SAIVA SIDDHANTA

● **Tirukkural** expounds the basic principles of **Saiva Siddhanta** philosophy.

The self-realisation of man, i.e. the attainment of Bliss, has been allegorically portrayed as seeking refuge at the lotus feet of God. This has been called **Adiser Gnanam** in **Saiva Siddhanta.**

Another important doctrine of **Saiva Siddhanta** is that the world is not created by God. God, soul, and world have evolved themselves without a creator. The primordial energy had its own evolution, which

resulted in the origin of the three eternal objects, i.e., God, soul and the world.

This basic tenet of **Saiva Siddhanta** has been clearly expressed in the first **Kural Venba** itself. **Valluvar** states that *God is* the first among the Three Categories of primordial energy by the term **mutala**, i.e., the first. Nowhere he expresses that 'God as creator', (the world), the later-idea of Brahamanic Hinduism.

—Thiru. N. R. Murugavel

A WORK ON RATIONALISM

***Tiruvalluvar** was a Rationalist of the first order. He was a *pioneer* in condemning the menace of **Hindu** imperialism in Tamilnadu so, Tirukkural can be claimed as a work on Rationalism.

—Pulavar Thiru. Kuzhanthai

FINEST FLOWER

***Kamban's** praise of Tamil, as 'Ever-living (eternal) Tamil' is more appropriate only to the case of **Tirukkural**. It is the finest flower that has blossomed in the garden of Tamil culture, which will never become a faded flower that will lose its fragrance and brightness in the ravages of time and clime.

—**Dr. M. Govindasami**

BALANCED VIEW

*This immortal work of **Valluvar**, has attracted the attention of various people of the world who have lived in the different ages of history.

The greatness and many-facets of **Tirukkural** have raised some doubts in the minds of some scholars who are well-known for their partiality and vested interests. Some of them tell that **Tirukkural** is not an

original composition and show some reasons to establish that **Tirukkural** as an adaptation.

They adduce that **Kural** inculcates the ideas of **Trivarga**, which are embedded in the Sanskrit treatises on ethics and polity. Others will attribute **Sukkraniti** and **Manudharmasastra** as the main source-books, from which **Valluvar** has borrowed freely.

Though there are some similarities between **Kural** and the works cited above the spirit of **Tirukkural** in its exposition and expression of moral ideals which transcends the barriers of caste and community, land and language and culture and constitutions of the world are quite different from the Sanskrit treatises. No one who is endowed with a balance of mind would deny this basic difference and appreciate the superiority of **Tirukkural**.

—Dr. K. Sundaramurti

THE SYMBOL OF AMMAIYAPPAR

***Tirukkural** appears as **Ammaiyappar** in its form of two feet, i.e., long-line and short-line of the couplet form. Besides this, the embodiment of God-godess into a single form, could not be divided into two halves, but it is a composite one. In order to highlight this inseparable aspect of **Arthanarisvara, Valluvar** symbolically uses the term **Adhibhagavan** in the first couplet of **Tirukkural**.

—Prof. A. Sivalinganar

VALUABLE WORK OF MANKIND

In the thought and expressions of **Valluvar,** the concept of 'one world' appears supreme by the usage of words like land (**Nilam**) larger land (**Manilam**), Universe (**Vaiyam**), earth (**Gnalam**) and world (**Ulakam**).

Valluvar addresses the man—the man of the Universe not like the **Gitacharya** who preached **Arjuna**, a devotee, friend and a Kith and Kin of himself. Hence, the ideals of moral and social life enunciated by **Valluvar** have an universal appeal and are applicable to the whole of mankind.

—Dr. S. N. Kandasami

KALEIDOSCOPIC WISDOM

*In **Tirukkural**, one can find a Kaleidoscopic wisdom that will inspire the people to lead a simple living with high thinking.

Dr. Avvai D. Natarajan

MAXIMS FOR A HUMANE LIFE

*The path paved by **Tiruvalluvar** for a virtuous life in the world has been acclaimed as an exemplary one. The maxims of **Tirukkural** induces every man to lead a

life that will ensure and enhance him as a real human being.

—**Kallai D. Kannan**

OPTIMISTIC APPROACH

* **Tirukkural** is the most popular Tamil literature that is known to the people of far and near. It has been translated into Telugu by more than half-a-dozen scholars in the last three centuries.

The moral and social values that are enshrined in **Tirukkural** have some similarity with the epigrams of **Vemana** but the spirit of approach has a basic different note. The lofty ideals of **Tirukkural** are **optimistic**, while the epigrams of **Vemana** pronounces a philosophy of pessimism.

—**Dr. T. S. Manickam**

BOOK OF LIFE

Tirukkural is a book of life of the whole of life. Chapters on ethics, politics,

economics and human enjoyment are all actuated by one underlying purpose viz development of human personality in terms of love and compassion.

—**Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi**

MAIN SOURCE OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The **Tirukkural** of **Tiruvalluvar** is one of the oldest of the extant Tamil literature. The sacred **Tirukkural** is the best read Tamil work among the Tamils themselves. It also happens to be the best known and more often translated Tamil work in the various languages of the world.

Tiruvalluvar, was one of those great men of India, whose catholic spirit rose above the denominations of caste, creed, language and country and whose vision was not clouded by dogmas or prejudice of any kind. So, he stands as one of the main

source for the cause of national integration of India.

—**Dr. N. Sanjeevi**

TAMIL MARAI

* **Tirukkural** is the holy scripture of the Tamils. It reveals the mind and thought of the ancient Tamils, who have envisaged a new social order and the Brotherhood of man.

There is hardly any literaturary composition, which can be considered as equal to this **Marai** of the Tamils.

—**Thiru. Siruvai Mohanasundaram**

BOOK OF SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK

* Scientific inquiry has become the fashion of the day. What is the scientific inquiry? It is found in **Tirukkural.**

Valluvar has enunciated in the following two couplets, the rudiments of scientific inquiry.

"True wisdom is that which enobles a person to findout the real nature of a thing, though it may contain many significant features." (*Kural* 355).

"True wisdom is that which induces a person to discern the truth in the utterances of those, whoever they may be" (Kural 423)

In these two maxims, **Valluvar** enunciates the basic principles of scientific inquiry.

—Dr. V. C. Kulandaisami

WORK OF HEATHEN'S WISDOM

* The 'Sacred Kural' have attracted the attention o f most of the missionaries who have come over to India in the last three centuries.

The lofty wisdom of **Tirukkural**, has changed their mis-conceptions about the heathens of India.

They have discovered the spirit and magnificent thought of India and made a comparative study of **Tirukkural** with the Western classics and also with the holy scriptures of India.

Thus, they brought a new awareness among the European and American scholars about the ancient wisdom of the Tamils as well as of the Indian thought. They have played an important role as pioneers, who opened new vistas in the study of **Tirukkural.**

—**Dr. K. Meenakshisundaram**

THREE CUPS OF HONEY

*: The humming bees bestow honey as a boon to the humanity. In the same way, **Tiruvalluvar** the poet and philosopher of ancient Tamilnadu has given three cups of honey as a gift to mankind, in his masterpiece.

In his didactic work, **Tirukkural** one can taste the honey of the dramatic monologues of the lovers, the sweetness of the 'Home—sweet Home', the humane ideals and the egalitarian mysticism.

—Dr. T. Muthukkannappar

A WORK ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

* **Tirukkural**, the most popular Tamil literature is the Bible of the Tamils. It does not highlight the tenets of any particular religion.

It is secular in its spirit. The ideals of moral life that are enshrined in **Tirukkural**, persuades people to cultivate cordial relationship with all other human beings.

We can cite a number of couplets from the chapters on Friendship, Evil - Friendship and False - Friendship.

—Dr. A. N. Perumal

BOOK OF EGALITARIANISM

What kind of state was it that gave **Tiruvalluvar**, with the catholicity and universal outlook, his philosophy and inspiration? Between the third and the first century B. C., dynasties of the **Chera**, **Chola** and **Pandya** kings ruled over the different parts of Tamilnadu, having wide international contacts with countries like Rome, Greece, Egypt, Malaysia and China.

Valluvar had a wider vision of the world. In order to alleviate the miseries of mankind, **Valluvar**, composed this Universal Book of Egalitarianism', with pragmatic suggestions as panacea to the sorrows and sufferings of the human race.

—Thiru. C. Kuppusami

3
STUDIES IN COMPARISON

TIRUKKURAL AND HOLY SCRIPTURES

The **Tirukkural** is to the Tamils what the Bible is to the Christians, the Kuran to the Muslims, the Zend Avesta to the Parsis, the Torah to the Jews, and the Granth Sahib to the Sikhs. Therefore, the Tamils have called the Tirukkural the Tamil Veda.

Thiru. G. Vanmikanathan

TIRUKKURAL AND HOLY GOSPELS

Tiruvalluvar preached and propagated moral values as the basis of a stable society. His teachings transcend barriers of religion, class, language, time or space. What is marvellous about his writings is the direct appeal to the heart and rational conviction to the mind. In this aspect it excels the holy gospels. If we can practise a fraction what he has left as a glorious legacy, life will be full of meaning and rewarding.

—Hon'ble K. K. Shaw

GREATEST PRAGMATIC PHILOSOPHER

The poetic stage of literary development and the pursuit of knowledge ushered into the philosophical period of Tamil literature. **Tiruvalluvar**, the world re-knowned **Canror** of the **Sangam** Age, after patiently and persistently contemplating on the various aspects and problems of human life, gave to the world a full-fledged philosophy of life, in his famous didactic work. He is pragmatic in his treatment of the problems of life.

This spirit of contemplation and philosophical speculation culminated in the didactic literature of **Tiruvalluvar.** His masterpiece reveals the loftiest sentiments and the purest philosophy of life in his scripture. In these aspects, he excels Plato and Aristotle, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius,

Lord **Krishna** and **Manu** and Lao-Tse and Confucius.

—**Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu**

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE TAMILS

The **Kural's** sentences are as binding as the **Ten Commandments** on the Jews. **Kural** is as important and influential on the Tamil mind as **Dante's** great work on the language and thought of Italy.

—**Mr. Charles E. Gover**

VALLUVAR AND JOHN F. COMENIUS

To Valluvar, the ultimate aim of education is spiritual awakening through self-realisation achieved by a process of elimination of the superfluous and transitory from the core of reality and truth. To him this life on earth is a preparation for eternity. He believed, as did John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) later, that "the

ultimate end of man is eternal happiness with God."

—**Prof. V. K. Sivaprakasam**

VALLUVAR AND KEATS

The section of **Tirukkural** on love (Kamattupal or Inbattupal) is among the most sensuous poetry in the world, comparable only with the young outpourings of the heart of highly sensuous poets like Shakespeare, Milton and Keats. But there is in **Tiruvalluvar's** poetry this difference - it is not the poetry of the flesh alone, or the sensuousness of the five senses alone, for to him sex-love is the gateway to all the noblest things of life and all the highest pleasures of the intellect and the spirit. It is a spiritual ladder from the lowest earth to the highest heavens. Sex - the real sex as seen by **Tiruvalluvar** makes

every moment the dawn of a new era of eternity as yet unknown even es, every step in knowledge opens up a vista of unexplored expanses of knowledge as yet unknown. (vide couplet 1110)

—**Dr. K. Appadurai**

SOCRATES OF SOUTH INDIA

Kambar is the Homer and **Tiruvalluvar**, the Socrates of South India.

—**Prof. T. Chelvakesavaraya Mudaliar**

VALLUVAR AND PLATO

Tirukkural is worthy of the divine Plato himself.

—**Rev. H. Bower**

VALLUVAR AND CHRIST

It is very interesting to see that **Tiruvalluvar** also, like Christ and the New Testament writers, has no prejudice against family life, or conjugal love or the sexual

act. It is interesting because he is one of the few Indians who consider family life, conjugal love, *and the sexual* act as holy and good and elevating. We shall summarize here what he teaches concerning conjugal love.

—Dr. Lawrence Gnanadurai

KURAL AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the **Kural,** there is no teaching, as in the New Testament, concerning a divine community held together by agape. Nor does it speak about cosmic salvation through a divine and Supernatural community. The Kural does not speak about a redeemed and redeeming community which is bound by love and which redeems the world by a life of love, of anbu, of agape. Salvation in the Kural is limited to that of individual devotees who are loving and good to one another.

—Dr. Lawrence Gnanadurai

VALLUVAR AND BUDDHISM

It must be said that there is no evidence to support the suggestion that he borrowed any of his ideas from Christian sources. It is not impossible that the influence of Buddhist and Jain teachings together with his own meditation upon the problems of life, under the inspiration of the spirit of godliness led him to the thoughts and ideals which he has so beautifully expressed in his couplets.

—**Rev. H. A. Popley**

ORIGINALITY OF TREATMENT

But wheather he (Valluvar) borrows, his material from Sanskrit or follows Tamil tradition, he displays on originality of treatment and a sequence of ideas entirely his own, which contributes much to the merit of the poem.

—**Prof. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar**

KURAL AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Indian philosophical background against which the **Kural** could be approached - not merely for the sake of convenience but because of the 'rootedness' of the **Kural** in Indian Philosophy and Culture - needs some specific reference here. In an important sense, Indian Philosophy itself could be described as a philosophy of values. From the point of view of a social analysis of the Indian Philosophical arguments especially, the method of axiological analysis is extremely significant inasmuch as it has the merit of keeping the track of the metaphysical idea even when the purely ethico-social values are exhorted upon the highest ideal that is accepted in Indian Philosophy referred to as **Parama purushartha**, liberation or self-realization (**Moksha**) is a value to be

realized. That is why it is referred to as a value for man (**Purushartha**). It is an end (**Siddhi**) to be achieved (realized) and achieving a Siddhi in the Indian terminology, is possible only through adopting the appropriate means (***Sadhanas***). In an over simplified way, the **Purusarthas** (the human aspirations) of **dharma** (Righteousness), **artha** (material well-being) and **akam** (pleasure) may be referred to as the sadhanas. But to **Tiruvalluvar, Aram** is not a means (Sadhana) but an end in itself.

—Dr. S. Gopalan

VALLUVAR AND BRAHMA

Centuries ago, Saint **Tiruvalluvar** considered as an **Avatara** of **Brahma**, wrote the **Tirukkural** which contains in its 1330 couplets, all the wisdom and knowledge. This work has been a source of inspiration and practical guidance to the

people of Tamilnadu for the ages. These verses have a style of their own - terse, simple, and direct - and it is regarded as wonderful and significant as the Gita.

—**Hon'ble V. V. Giri**

BHAGAVAD GITA AND TIRUKKURAL

These two (the **Tirukkural** and the **Bhagavad - gita**)Precious gems set in the diadem of Indian culture represent the quintessence of the perennial philosophy which is the pride of this ancient land. Great minds, in almost every generation, have drawn inspiration from these two works and have taught them for the benefit of mankind as a whole. The import and appeal of these texts know no limits set by time and space. The **gita** and the **kural** are universal scriptures. Goodlife, dedicated life, life devoted to the pursuit of excellence is what they teach.

—**Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.**

KURAL AND GITA

Whilst **Bhagavad gita** in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining in active life that it is in accordance with the order of universe, the **Kural** justifies it-what an advance-by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good.

According to the **Kural**, duty is not contained as in the **Bhagavad Gita** to what the caste calling involves but consists in general in 'all that is good.' Maxims about joy in activity, such as one would not expect from the Indian lips, bear witness to the strength of the world and life-affirmation are present in the **Kural**. There hardly exists in the literature of the world, a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.

—Dr. Albert Schweitzer

SUPERIORITY OF TIRUKKURAL

The **Gita's** teachings are possibly valid within the four walls of the **Sanatana Dharma** the code of Hindu morals. But the same cannot be said of the **Kural**, for it seems to be meanigful to a wider audience and reveals a mind some what displeased with the contemporary order.

—Dr. C. Subrahmanian

TIRUKKURAL AND AGAMAS

Tirukkural is one of such texts in high Tamil verse. It is an abridged but elaborated version of the first **Tantram** on virtue called **Karana Agama**, comprising in all, 3000 sacred hymns, called **Tirumanthiram**. The preface of **Tirumanthiram** deals with god, Rain, Ascetics, virtue and the Ruler.

—Sri-La-Sri Somasundara Sri Gnanasambanda Desika Paramacariya Swamikal

YOGI AND BHOGI

Vemana is a **Yogi** and **Valluvar** is a **Bhogi**, and both show respect and regard for what they are not. Though **Valluvar** says much in praise of the life of a householder, a grahasta, he extols equally the greatness of ascetics. According to **Vemana** a **bhogi** or a kaami alone qualifies to became a **yogi**. **Valluvar** seems to respect all ascetics alike. Not so **Vemana**. Being an ascetic or **Yogi** himself, **Vemana** knows that some ascetics are genuine and some are spurious. He says: "salt and camphor look alike, but when I examine and try to know the flavours, their tastes differ; thus do the virtuous difference between the real and the imposters from the ordidnary.

—**Dr. C. Radhakrishna Sarma**

VALLUVAR AND TULASIDASAR

Tirukkural is like a counter part of **Tulasidasa's Ramayana** in southern India, but **Tulasidasa's Ramayana**, though a much lates work, was known to Gujarath much earlier than **Tirukkural**. This is because of the geographical situation of Gujarat, and its offinity of language with Hindi, rather than Tamil. Perhaps **Tirukkural** was known earlier to the western world than in modern Gujarat. *Much credit* goes to the earlier missionaries who presented in Latin, English, German and *French, the translations* of **Tirukkural** to the European people.

—Dr. K. M. Munshi

VALLUVAR AND KABIR

Tiruvalluvar and **Kabir** are the beacon lights of the South and North of India, who have kept of the torch of wisdom ablaze

through the ages of trials and tribulations in the history of our country.

They were the great synthasizers of the wisdom of various creeds to pave the path of liberation. Both of them are known for their progressive thinking and radical humanism.

The one presents the ancient Tamil wisdom in the light of Buddhism, Jainism and the vedic lore. The other expresses the quintessence of the ancient Upanisadic thought and the nuances of Persian and Arabic culture.

—**Dr. Ravindra kumar Seth**

TIRUVALLUVAR AND GURUNANAK

Both, **Guru Nanak** and **Tiruvalluvar** were householders cum Teachers. Domestic virtue, truth, purity, humility and charity form the favourite themes of some of their

finest verses...They were true and great teachers of men who are highly fortunate in possessing their inspiring, enlightening and everlasting teachings right in their own words.

—**Dr. Harnam Singh Shan**

RARE MASTERPIECE

The Tamil language, by reason of the conciseness and clarity of its locution and the spirit of piety and devotion that has characterised the Tamil people, has brought into existence a devotional literature which is not surpassed in the world and can be ranked, along with Sanscrit and Hebrew productions among the most authentic treasures of literary art. The Tamil country has also had the inestimable advantage of the wise patronage of successive rulers and affluent persons and the regulative and critical appreciations and analysis by

successive academies that flourished in the Sangam period and later. It is in that period and with that background that **Thiruvalluvar** created immortal 'kural'. Very rarely in the history of the world's literature has such epigrammatic and jewel-like brilliance of ethical and philosophic maxims been united with a mellowed wisdom that has placed the ideal before itself of a just appraisal of human values and a tolerant understanding of all aspects of human life.

—Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

BODY AND SOUL

Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural and **Manickavachakar's Tiruvachakam** are supposed to be the body and the soul respectively of Tamil, the beloved Mother. At least this is the faith of the Tamil Saivites. The one builds up the character

and conduct of human beings while the other feeds their souls on an felicitous food of divine ambrosia and prepares them for their eternal Beatitude. The one develops the intellect and brain and makes men live a life of honour, dignity and honesty. The other purifies the soul of its dross and dirt and melts and moulds it in the pattern of endless Bliss. The one lays the foundations for and the other actually builds up the kingdom of god in man. The one is the dawn of divinity and the other is its dazzling sun of day. And both of them are complimentary to each other. Without **Tirukkural's** guidance no one can have his body and mind in the best of form. Without **Tiruvachakam,** no one can have his heart and soul quite healthy and whole. And both are necessary to build up the perfect man with a balanced

development of body and soul. Thus it will be seen that **Tirukkural** and **Tiruvachakam**, which are considered to be the body and soul respectively of the blessed language of Tamil, are equally the nourishing food for the body and soul alike of the lucky students of both of them.

—Thiruvachagamani.
K. M. Balasubramaniam

PHILOSOPHER OF REALISM AND DEALISM

Saint **Valluvar's** approach to moral doctrine is marked by a very thorough knowledge of human psychology and a desire to help imperfect humanity, adhere to the goal of perfection. His general principles hold good for all time and at all places. His prophetic outlook embraced the entire humanity in one sweep, and deduced common minimum moral standard which

every individual should follow, if society were to progress on just lines. Where as other *moralists* attempted to reform society as such, **Valluvar** concentrated on reforming and correcting the individual, so that *the emulative* effect of the individual's reform *may* project in the galaxy of ethical poets.

There are ethical poets who *soar* into rarefied heights of idealism; but they have no roots in the soil, *and their dreams are of* no great practical value. There are still others who are so obsessed with the demands of realism and practical calculations that their outlook become coarse and prosaic, without ennobling touch of ideal vision. Saint **Valluvar** struck a golden mean between these two, because a poem without an ideal in a corpse adorned and a poem saturated with idealism but devoid of

practical value, is only a spirit without a body. In the magic web that **Valluvar** wove the warp is realism and the woof is idealism.

—Hon'ble M. Bhaktavatsalam

VALLUVAM AND UTILITARIANISM

In Valluvar's system the three pillars of ethics, polity and love from an integrated structure. One does not run counter to the other. To understand any aspect **of Kural,** one must necessarily understand and accept his code or ethics of **Aram.** For it is a single current that pervades the entire poem. He sees polity only through an ethical eye. **Valluvar** gives it (ethics) the pride of place in the introduction (payiram) itself. Ethics of **Valluvar** *is not something* demonstrable as for instance in the case of the utilitariam philosophy.

—Prof. V. K. Sivaprakasam

LAW AND JUSTICE

The legal philosophers of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries realised a close relation between law and justice. The word 'justice' is used here not in the sense of justice dispensed by courts, but in the sense of morals and ethics. In morals, our deductions are with reference to motives of conduct; in law they are with reference to the outward results of conduct. It is common knowledge that the longing for justice is men's eternal longing for happiness. So justice is happiness that man cannot find alone, as an isolated individual, and hence seeks in society. Justice is social happiness. In Tiruvalluvar's concept of justice is 'Aram'; it is social virtue, social happiness. He has used that word in a very broad sense referring to many kind of virtues that promote social happiness. We

shall consider 'law and justice in the light of this view.

Prof. A. Palaniswami

NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

As a Tamil classic of antiquity, **Tirukkural** while sustaining the glory of Tamil culture, simultaneously maintains as well as glorifies the spirit of Internationalism.

—Dr. M. Muthuraman

SPIRITUALISM AND MATERIALISM

The progressive aspects of a society or nation, by and large, are decided by the moral and spiritual values they profess and practice. That does not mean that there could be no recognition of material values which are certainly for the well-being of the people. **Tiruvalluvar** recognises the material basis of social and spiritual institutions. However, the sage hastens to add that the material values should be subordi-

nated to the principles of Truth and Goodness. Otherwise, it would lead to materialism, as it has already happened in many parts of the world.

—Dr. M. Muthuraman

PACIFISM

The one basic idea in him is, a blanket of pacifism thrown over a stable ordered society, in which the very pacifism will preserve order.

—Dr. N. Subrahmanian

Part - II

Tirukkural In The Languages Of The World

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Kural in prose-form, Tamil couplets, in Malayalam script: First written in 1595 by an unknown author. Published in the Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute, Vol. VI, pt. II; Vol. VIII, pt. I; Vol. IX, pt. I; in 1938, 1940 and 1941.

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(a) Vithyanantha Natha, K. V.
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(6) Michael, S.M.
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From this survey of **Tirukkural** translations, we can ascertain that **Tirukkural** has been translated only in **thirteen** Indian languages, **seven** in Asian languages and **twelve** in European languages. So, it is yet a desideratum that this great Classic of the Tamils should be made easily accessible first to the people of Northern India, and then to the various countries of the world.

Part III

Evalaution of the Observations of the Foreigners*

* This Paper has been Presented in the Fifth International Tamil Conference—Seminar held at Madurai in 1981.

The advent of the Europeans to Tamilnadu heralded a new era in the annals of the Tamil language and literature. European scholars and missionaries have made successful attempts to introduce the wisdom of the Tamils embedded in the great classic of **Tiruvalluvar**, to the Western World. In 1730 A.D. Father C. Beschi translated the first two parts of Tirukkural into Latin.[1] This gave a great momentum to the study of Tamil Language and literature by the succeeding generations of European Missionaries.

GREATNESS OF TIRUKKURAL

From the reference made by M. Ariel to an earlier French version of Tirukkural (Selections), it appears that the scholars of France were well aquainted with it in 1767 A.D.[2] Extracts from **Tirukkural** have been

introduced for the first time to the Englishmen by N.E. Kindersley with the title 'The Ocean of Wisdom' which has been included in a literary anthology known as the 'Specimens of Hindu Literature'.[3] These are the earliest attempts made by the three different nationalities of Europe to draw the attention of their countrymen towards the mysterious wisdom of India.

For the last three hundred years, **Tirukkural** has been translated into a number of languages in Europe and Asia.[4] From a cursory glance at these translations and observations, one can get a flood of light to understand and appreciate the lofty ideals of **Tiruvalluvar** in a wider perspective of World Literature.

What is most striking on the European's treatment of Kural is their catholicity of

literary taste, which has been enunciated and elucidated by Goethe in his concept of world literature. He has said to his friend that "national literature is now an unmeaning term; the epoch of the world literature is at hand, and every one must try to hasten its approach".[5] A number of European scholars began to interpret **Tirukkural** in the light of Goethe's theory of world literature.

In the eighteenth century, Beschi was thinking on the lines of Goethe. He observes that "He (Tiruvalluvar) shines as a star in the darkness of night, a lovely flower in the desert, a light that drives the gloom of ignorance and a beacon—light to the whole world".[6]

M. Ariel, the Frenchman who had a great fascination for **Kural**, in a letter to

his friend Burnouf in 1848, speaks of **Tiruvalluvar's** great work as "a masterpiece of Tamil literature, one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought. What above all is wonderful in the Kural is the fact that its author addresses himself, without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind".[7] This careful observation of this French scholar points out the universal outlook of the Tamil sage.

Charles E. Gover is one of those who had considered Tirukkural as one of the great literatures of the world. He says that "Kural is essentially the literary treasure, the poetic mouthpiece, the highest type of verbal and moral excellence among the Tamil people, as ever Homer was among the Greeks".[8] Then Gover points out the importance of this work. He affirms that,

"it is no exaggeration to say that it is as important in Tamil literature, as influential on the Tamil mind, as Dante's great work on the language and thought of Italy".[9]

Subsequently **Tirukkural** has been fully translated into English by Dr. G. U. Pope, the reknowned 'Student of Tamil Literature.' In his Benediction to Valluvar, he paints a glowing picture of Valluvar in the following form:

"Sage Valluvar, Priest of the lowly clan,
no tongue repeats, no speech reveals thy name;
Yet, all things changing, dieth not thy fame,
For thou art Bard of Universal Man".[10]

This encomium paid by an English clergy to a Tamil poet in the heyday of the British rule in India is particularly remarkable.

In the thirties of the century, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the eminent German philosopher and social worker offered a great tribute to *Tirukkural in the following* words :

"With sure strokes the **Kural** draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity. On the most varied questions concerning the conduct of man to himself and to the world, its utterances are characterised by nobility and good sense. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom".[11]

It is interesting to note that the scholars of Soviet Russia hold that Tirukkural deserves to be considered as one of the finest pieces of world literature. Dr. Alexander M. Pyatigorsky, the great Indologist, in his scholarly foreword to the

Russian translation of the Tamil masterpiece asserts that "the Kural of Tiruvalluvar is rightly considered as chef D'oeuvre of both Indian and world literature. This is due not only to the great artistic merits of the work but also, and this is most important, to the lofty humane ideas permeating it, which are equally precious to the people all over the world, of all periods and countries".[12]

These European missionaries and scholars have placed Tirukkural in the front rank of the precious classics of the world, which requires special mention here.

Our own national poet Subramania Bharathi sings the glories of Tiruvalluvar in this same vein:

"Tamilnadu gave unto the world Valluvar

And one thereby great reknown".[13]

COMPOSITION OF THE ONE MASTER-POET

M. Jules Vinson was a French Tamilologist of the 19th century, who served in the French Colony of South India. He was a devoted student of the Tamil language and literature. When he made a thorough study of Tirukkural, he began to think that it must be an anthology or at least the work of two authors. He adduces the reasons for his suspicion. He observes that the Kamattuppal, the third part of **Tirukkural** differs entirely in its form and content from the first two parts of the work. Besides this, the arrangement of the chapters and verses in **Arattuppal** and **Porutpal** appear very much similar to **Naaladiyar,** the other popular didactic work in Tamil. So it is better to treat Tirukkural as a compilation of various

verses composed by several poets rather than the composition of one Master-poet.[14]

But this view has been ignored subsequently on the basis of further research undertaken by Dr. G. U. Pope. He asserts that "it is not an anthology, but the perfect and most elaborate work of one master. The third part might be deemed separable, but the manner even there is quite peculiar to our bard. As one link in a chain of evidence, the following is remarkable. The poet uses 'todi' nine times as equivalent to 'lady'; but never uses the same epithet twice. So with 'ilai'. There is a studied variety in epithets throughout".[15]

Misgivings about Kamattuppal

Some of the European missionaries had some misgivings about the third part of this

work. Charles E. Gover sarcastically say that "the third part is, in fact, not suited for a christian dress".[16] Rev. W. H. Drew refrained from translating Kamattuppal into English. He gave the following reason for this. He remarks that "it could not be translated into any European language without exposing the translator to nfamy".[17]

But Rev. G. U. Pope rejects these views on the following grounds. He says that "this is only true in regard to certain of the commentaries upon it, which are simply detestable. I am persuaded that it is perfectly pure in its tendency and in the intention of its wise and high-souled composer".[18]

The main reason for this misunderstanding appears to be their ignorance about

the **ahapporul** tradition of the Tamils. Most of the ancient Tamil classics were in the form of palm-leaves till 1860 A.D. Only in the sixties of the 19th century, some of the Sangham literature began to see the light of the day. So, most of the missionaries were not aware of the noble tradition of love poetry in Tamil.

A recent scholar who had an early access to the Sangham literature asserts that "**Tiruvalluvar's Kamattuppal** is utterly different from any Sanskrit Kamasastras. While vatsayana's work (and all Sanskrit Erotology) is a Sastra, that is objective and scientific analysis of sex, the third part of Kural is a poetic picture of Ero's of ideal love, of its dramatic situations."[19]

Bridal-Mysticism

In order to avoid this discontent, some of the native and foreign scholars tried to interpret **Kamattuppal** in the light of Mystic love, i.e., the allegorical representation of love between the soul and God. In the devotional literature of Tamil, we find some instances of the sublimation of mundane love into the mystic love. Then this appears to have become a cherished tradition in the Bhakti literature. The old commentators of Thirukkural have never interpreted Kamattuppal from this view point. But, this view was prevalent among the missionaries.[20] We can get some glimpses of this allegorical representation of love, which is well known to us as 'Naayaka-Naayaki Bhava'.

Dr. Schweitzer believes that this method of interpretation might have been given by

those who could not accept the 'life affirmation' theory. He observes that "in 250 maxims—they form the concluding part of the work—earthly love is lauded. Later times, because they cause offence, interpret them allegorically as concerning the love of the soul to God."[21]

Literary Excellences of Tirukkural

This didactic literature reveals originality in ideas and technique. The poet breaks the rigidity of poetic conventions by the skilful manipulation of simple innovations and also by felicity of expression.

Foreign scholars have tried their best to find out the reasons for the popularity of Tirukkural. Besides its Universal outlook and humane approach to the problems of life, they point out to its exquisite poetic form as another reason for its greatness